
The
FULNESS
of
BLESSING.

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SMILEY.

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THE
FULNESS OF BLESSING;

OR,
THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST,

AS ILLUSTRATED FROM
THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

BY
SARAH F. SMILEY.

"I REJOICE AT THY WORD, AS ONE THAT FINDETH GREAT SPOIL."—PSALM CXIX.

NEW YORK:
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TO MY FRIENDS.

TO all those, beloved in Christ Jesus, to whom in widely scattered places, it has been the joy of my life to unfold the treasures of the Word, and to all others who make it their delight and meditation, I present this volume.

I have written it as ever looking out upon a multitude who earnestly desire a deeper knowledge of their Lord, and as one pressed in spirit to fulfil a sacred trust.

It is my earnest prayer that each of you in whose hands I place it, may find the Lord opening your hearts to attend to His own truth, and coming in Himself in the fulness of His blessing.

Most especially do I pray that it may bring some message to the many ministers of Christ, to whose kindness I have owed so largely the opportunities of also serving Him. If any who are called to teach others, shall find here such truth as may enlarge and strengthen their own hearts first, it will, indeed, be a multiplying of my joy. While I can not venture to hope that my secluded study will secure on many points the same exactness as the training of the schools, yet I feel well assured that to you, as to

myself, this will seem a light thing compared to any portion of that Anointing, which teacheth all things and is truth and is no lie.

And now I would solemnly dedicate these pages to Him, who even in their writing has so richly blessed my own soul; entreating Him to defend them from any misapprehension that might mar their service, or harm His flock, and to take them into His own hands and bless them, as once He did the loaves and fishes, to the feeding of all such as hunger and thirst after righteousness.

SARATOGA SPRINGS, *October*, 1876

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THE FULNESS OF BLESSING.

INTRODUCTION.

“THE HOLY GHOST THIS SIGNIFYING.”—(*Hebrews* ix. 8.)

MUSICIANS tell us that the quality of the voice in song depends upon its overtones; that is, the accordant notes which are heard sounding faintly above the fundamental tones. It is the same peculiarity which gives the silvery ring to some voices in speech. And so as we listen to the voices of the Law and of the Prophets, we find a wondrous, and, to some, a mysterious charm. But the ear that has been trained by the same master-skill that taught their lips, solves the secret of the spell, and catches with delight through the deep thunder utterances the glad over-tones of the coming Gospel. They could not rise so high as to utter its loftiest truth; but they reached on to this, and *this*, the Spirit, speaking through them, signified. Alas! that for so many it was signified in vain—for the dull of mind became sluggish of heart to believe *all* that the prophets have spoken.

It is a somewhat astonishing folly that stands charged to the saints, that so many who have essayed

to expound the Word of God, have, in the very outset, and, as a matter of principle, flung away that key which can alone unlock its most intricate wards. The sequel has been too often, that they fell into the same ditch of ignorance with the confessedly blind whom they professed to lead. Until a period comparatively recent, and not yet fully inaugurated, the majority of English and American expositors have ignored the typical teaching of the Old Testament, some of them even denouncing all such interpretations not fully sanctioned by the later Scriptures.* With all that erudition to which we owe so much, they yet have missed a treasure which God, even in hiding,

* For a list of authors adopting this view, see Fairbairn on the Typology of Scripture, pp. 37, 39. He quotes the following from Moses Stuart: "Just so much of the Old Testament is to be accounted typical as the New Testament affirms to be so, and *no more*." He adds this comment upon such a system: "It drops a golden principle for the sake of avoiding a few lawless aberrations. . . . And in proportion as a more profound and spiritual acquaintance with the Divine Word is cultivated, will the feeling of dissatisfaction grow in respect to a style of interpretation that so miserably dwarfs and cripples the relation that the preparatory bears to the ultimate in God's revelations."

Dean Alford deals more summarily with the system: "Of course no one who reads, marks, learns, and inwardly digests the Scriptures, can subscribe to the shallow and ignorant dictum of Macknight. 'This is to be laid down as a fixed rule, that no ancient history is to be considered allegorical but that which inspired persons have interpreted allegorically.'"—*The Greek Testament*, by Henry Alford, D.D. Fourth Ed. Vol. III., p. 48.

brought often to the surface, that the eager and earnest might track its deeper veins.

Along with some happy exceptions to this statement, there have been others who erred by an opposite extreme. Among the latter may be numbered not a few of the early Christian writers. These first explorers of the rich mines brought up such a mixture of metals as was beyond their skill to assay, and so mingled fact and fancy as to cast discredit upon their work. And yet, along with every great revival of Evangelical Truth, these mines have been re-opened, if only for random research.

Meanwhile, all along these centuries, a mass of simple Christian believers, escaping the dicta of the wise and prudent, have been steadily and instinctively applying this typical teaching to their own needs. At least the babes, who were never sent to school, have kept this knowledge which their Father gave them;* and as the most childlike simplicity is always

* "The real secret of the neglect of the types, I can not but think, may, in part, be traced to this—that they require more spiritual intelligence than many Christians can bring to them. To apprehend them, requires a certain measure of spiritual capacity and habitual exercise in the things of God, which all do not possess for want of abiding fellowship with Jesus. The mere superficial glance upon the Word in these parts, brings no corresponding idea to the mind of the reader. The types are, indeed, pictures, but to understand the pictures it is necessary we should know something of the reality. The most perfect representation of a steam-engine to a South Sea savage, would be wholly and hopelessly unintelligible to him simply because the

close of kin to the most profound wisdom, we see at last the highest scholarship, and especially German scholarship, on the side of these little ones. The prominence given of late both to unfulfilled prophecy and unexplained type, is only the due honoring of the claim that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." That God has chosen to teach us in such a way—by patterns, types, and symbols, among all His divers manners, is enough of itself to justify its wisdom. It is the skill of the master, who has a further aim than to make all things as easy as possible to the learner. He has given us Holy Scripture, not to read merely, but to *search*.

Such teaching is analogous to another which began with Creation, when God let His invisible things be clearly seen and understood by the things which He made, giving to the world, even in the Primer of Nature, such lessons as left it without excuse if it knew Him not. And having filled one volume with the living letters by which men should spell out the words of Truth, it was but fitting that human life, as wrought out in History, should be another for still higher study: that laws and customs, arts and events, reality, the outline of which was presented to him, was something hitherto-unknown. But let the same drawing be shown to those who have seen the reality, such will have no difficulty in explaining the representation. And the greater the acquaintance with the reality, the greater will be the ability to explain the picture."--*The Law of the Offerings*, by Andrew Jukes, p. 6.

as arranged by God, should all be a revelation of Himself. And such the Scriptures assert them to be.*

"Which things are an allegory,"† is the simple statement of St. Paul respecting the two sons of Abraham, the one by a bond-woman, the other by a

* Rev. Hugh Macmillan ("The Garden and the City") speaks of "that subtle organization of Scripture, which must strike every exegete, and which, like the organization of nature, presents from every new point of view new harmonies of form and detail." Again, speaking of the resemblances of Scripture and the manifold combinations resulting: "The whole typology of Scripture is founded upon this law of mutual resemblance. The study of Scripture derives from it much of its charm and interest, for each special aspect of Divine truth can be perfectly combined with every other. Nay, more, the whole scheme of nature, the whole history of life is based upon the law in question. . . . All things, according to the poet, by a law divine, mingle in one another's being. And if the discovery of profound resemblances of form and analogies of structure, where others see only wide divergencies and palpable contrasts, be to the naturalist one of the purest of his pleasures, inasmuch as it brings him into contact with the Great Mind of the universe in whose image he was made; so over the soul of the Bible student there creeps a feeling of increasing joy and wonder at the fulness and subtlety of the connection by which each part of the Scriptures is bound to all the others—for this is the highest proof of its inspiration and of its fitness for gathering together all things in heaven and earth into One, even in Him who is the Truth and the Life, the Beginning and the End."—*See Introduction*, p. xxxix.-xlvi.

† Gal. iv. 24. "The lesson to be drawn from this whole passage, as regards the Christian use of the Old Testament, is of an importance which can scarcely be overrated."—*Conybeare and Howson's Life and Epistles of St. Paul*.

free-woman—although in the history itself not a hint of the kind is given. Again, concerning a variety of events, he twice asserts that “these things *happened* unto them for *types*.”* He does not even treat them as events first occurring, and then found afterward to convey a useful lesson, but he boldly traces an “intent” of God in permitting them so to happen, and then preserving their record for the lesson’s sake.† Yet this is the very point upon which we find such peculiar sensitiveness. Use, it is said, if it so please you, these historical incidents, and apply them as *illustrations* of truth. But do not call them *types*. Think your own profitable thoughts, but do not suggest that God had any such thoughts. Are we, then,

* Cf. I Cor. x. 6; I Cor. x. 11.

† “Every moment it becomes a more serious question whether this language [of Hebrew ideas and imagery] is to be allowed for as inaccurate in itself, but under the circumstances of the case inevitable, or whether it is to be insisted on as *the method prepared in the purpose of God for the most adequate expression of spiritual truth*. The question was, indeed,* decided by the two facts, that the Old Covenant itself was a Divine ordinance, and that its historical relations with the New Covenant were a Divine provision. Still, it was of high importance to the clearness and fixedness of the doctrine, that this connection between the two covenants should be deliberately shown to consist not in *rhetorical illustration*, but in a *divinely-intended system of analogies*. This is the permanent office of the Epistle to the Hebrews. . . . It expressly recognizes the fact that “the word of the beginning of Christ” had been enlarged by intervening teaching into a “perfection,” which many of those who are here addressed had sinfully and shamefully failed to receive; the

really more quick-sighted and far-sighted than the Spirit, who "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God?" Whatever of truth we see in any of these words of Inspiration we may be sure that He placed there, in order that we might see it.

Again, when it is said that "*these* things were types," they seem selected as examples and not as exceptions. Indeed, in the constant use of the Old Testament by our Lord and His Apostles, regarding its spirit rather than its letter—what it implies more than what it asserts, determining the nature of events more by their seed than by leaf or flower—we find the law of their true interpretation to be not literalness, but liberty.* And taking this ground themselves as highest authorities, they do not forbid us to

teachers sent from God having wrought out for them full expositions of truth, to which their old prepossessions had closed their hearts. And it exhibits the further fact that this perfecting of the truth by the fullest definite interpretation of the principles of the Gospel, had been accomplished by means of the true reading of the Old Testament in the light of the knowledge of Christ."—*Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament*—*Bampton Lectures*, by Thomas Dehany Bernard, p. 170.

*"The existence of an abiding spiritual sense underlying the literal text of the Old Testament, is sufficiently attested by the quotations in the New. Unless it be recognized, many of the interpretations of the Evangelists and Apostles must appear forced and arbitrary; but if we assume that it exists, their usage appears to furnish an adequate clew to the investigation of its most intricate mazes."—*Westcott's Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, p. 63.

follow ; on the contrary, it seems everywhere suggested that we should trace out these clews. "Have ye not read?" was the usual query of Jesus in drawing profound inferences from the simplest statements. His words imply, "Have ye not read it thus? Ye also should have seen its meaning as I do. How is it that ye do not understand?"

The Types of the Bible lie like so many island groups in the wide sea of Truth. The mainland of each, with many another isle, has been put upon our chart by the pen of inspiration. But all the little islets that lie clustering around are for us to explore. Nor have we to launch out into a far-off ocean. Our simple task is but to reach them from the shores discovered for us. The remotest of them shall hardly take us out of sight of land. Nor are we sent out adrift upon such new discoveries. As true as the needle to the pole-star, though that star be hidden, so does the Spirit ever point to Christ, even when we see Him not. And greater than that gift of the magnet to the voyager, was the promise to the souls of all that seek after God, "He will guide you into the whole truth."* All Scripture presupposes the light by which alone it can be truly read. Surely, it

* In this, as in all other quotations from Holy Scripture in this volume, wherever our present version at all obscures the meaning, free use has been made of others, as well as of the original. Except in a few instances, it has not seemed needful to credit the special authority or to indicate the change.

was not for a brief moment only that Jesus opened the understanding to "understand the Scriptures." There would seem to be a misapprehension of the very genius of Christianity among those who profess such alarm, lest venturing beyond that interpretation of Scripture given in itself, we should go utterly astray. There are and must needs be perils in all liberty. But they who, from unhallowed fear, forego the liberty, only fall into worse perils.

God, who gave us His Holy Spirit, has provided still further against danger in His promised gift of "a sound mind." Again, we have a safeguard in that important authority established in the Scriptures—the consenting judgment of the Church. Making all due allowance for the Church in her aphelion, and the dim sight of many in her brightest hours, yet that which fails finally to commend itself to the children of God whose lives are richest in experience, must be delusive.*

* We are *forced* to recognize the extent to which the judgment of the Church is responsible, from what we know of the collection of the Canon. In an extremely suggestive volume by the late Frederick Myers, his thoughts upon the latter subject will also apply to the one before us. I copy from the edition printed for private circulation only, though the work has since been published: "No event has exercised greater influence on the character of the Church of Christ than the existence of the Christian Scriptures, and yet no event was less apparently miraculous as contra-distinguished from providential. It was, it must be repeated, a result of the exercise of that enlightened and sanctified spiritual judgment which is the special continuous

But, it is objected, such license would flood us with a vast variety of interpretations, in itself a plain proof of error. This shallow argument is met by the Scriptures themselves. In the free use of this great store of types, the same figure does service in more than one direction; as, for instance, the Temple finds one fulfilment in Christ, another in the Church, and yet is fearlessly applied to the very body of an individual believer.* In fact, it appears to be a prominent feature of this whole plan of typical teaching, not to give us framed pictures, but a series of dissolving views.

Especially does St. Paul, in his use of the types and symbols of the Old Testament, take delight in turning them round and round, like so many bright fragments in a kaleidoscope. He breaks up suddenly a perfectly harmonious arrangement to give us a new combination, and so on with variations that seem simply inexhaustible. How can we but draw the in-

endowment of all ages of the Church; *which, if duly honored, would be found equal to great tasks always*, and which, if unduly dishonored, will be found to leave us in difficulties which will be also dangers. This case of the Christian Canon is a case in point. For, if none but a literal line and measure of Canonicity will be accepted, in this case there is none forthcoming; if Christian tact and discerning of spirit be despised, there is nothing which remains in their stead."—*Catholic Thoughts on the Bible and Theology*, 1841-1848, p. 52.

* Dr. Farrar, in his *Life of Christ*, speaks of this "many-sided symbolism" of some of the acts of Jesus. See Vol. II., p. 216.

ference that so our interpretation gives us a harmonious picture in full accord with Truth as otherwise revealed, we have in it a right lesson, though very possibly not the richest.

No one eye can ever, by itself, see all that God has thus taught us. No more can any one sect, nation, or age. There is needed for this the grand universality of the One Church, and the unity of the One Spirit. Only, *with all the saints*, shall we be able to comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height. In the great Body of the Church it is with our vision as with the eyes of so many insects. The organ is composite, and the many thousands of little eyes are grouped upon a convex surface ; and while the range of each is thus more limited than is the human eye, the field of vision, as a whole, is greatly widened. Nor is there really any lack to each, since equally with ours the vision is a unit. It is easy to accept the limitations of our own individual insight of Truth, as we find our gain in the widest sympathy with others. Each of us set to gather into a perfect focus some one aspect of Truth, we are bound to impart this, while we receive in return all the other aspects. To have the vision complete—to sweep over the whole range of revelation, we need the eyes of all the ages, of all nationalities, of all true creeds, of all temperaments—the eyes of youth and of age, the eyes of the unlettered and the learned. There is good ground to hope that in the Christianizing of

Oriental nations, one of our greatest gains will result from their clearer insight into symbolic teaching.

There is a still larger class of objectors who are ready to admit the value of typical teaching in a general way, but who feel the strongest repugnance to its interpretation in detail. For instance, they regard the Jewish sacrifices on the whole, as pointing to Christ. But the attempt to find significance in the minute arrangements of that ritual, they regard as simply contemptible. Does it ever enter into their thoughts that they are in danger of despising, not man, but God? If it be puerile to seek a meaning in them, why were they written by Inspiration, and why was so large a space assigned them? Yet it does not seem to us unworthy of the scientist to sit patiently before the tiniest thing in nature, and with his microscope, examine the most exquisite and skilful touches of the finger of God. He is perfectly sure that everything *has* a meaning, and he toils on to its discovery.* And is, then, God's Word so infe-

* As an instance of this, see a strong statement of Darwin as quoted by the Duke of Argyle in his "Reign of Law." It is taken from a work entitled "The various contrivances by which British and foreign Orchids are fertilized by Insects." By Chas. Darwin, F.R.S. London, 1862. "The strange position of the *Labellum* perched on the summit of the column, ought to have shown me that here was the place for experiment. *I ought to have scorned the notion that the Labellum was thus placed for no good purpose.* I neglected this plain guide, and, for a long time, completely failed to understand the flower," p. 262.

rior to His other works, that, like man's work, it can not bear this close inspection? Such, surely, is not the relative position which is claimed for it in the Word itself. Nor need we make an abatement from this claim from the fact that it is not, like nature, purely the work of God, but in part the work of man; since at least to the full extent of human imperfection, both in its origin and transmission, are human research and enlightened Christian judgment allowed to enter now.

But, again, the general objection to such interpretation falls with double force upon the *historics* of the Old Testament. Yet these, as we have already seen, are so interpreted in the New Testament. And one may well ask what such readers find in these portions that is spiritually "*profitable*." Nor can we be surprised at their frequent though half-reluctant admission of dullness, and a corresponding slight put upon this part of the Bible. Nor does the evil end here. As histories only, many of these events seem so unimportant, so repugnant even to our tastes, that it is no rare thing to find the germs of doubt and scepticism springing freely up in such waste and untilled soil.

No better instance of this can be selected than the Book of Joshua, which will be used as the historical basis for the teaching attempted in this volume. It is almost purely historical; and, to some, simply a book of bloody battles and a geographical description

of the divisions of the land of Canaan, with here and there a few lessons of faith, and courage, and kindred virtues. And if this, indeed, be all, then it may as well be openly said, as so often secretly thought, ministering far less to our spiritual needs than many an uninspired volume of Christian devotion. *There is no refuge from the scepticism that assails the Scriptures save in their more spiritual study.*

But approaching this same Book of Joshua with faith in that clear statement, "Now these things happened unto them for types," and reading it as a history indeed, but, at the same time, so anticipating the history of our own hearts as to be an allegory—we see now before us a Picture, the grandest in its proportions—the most life-like in its groupings—the most striking in its wealth of coloring—and the most skilful in its quiet touches, of any that God has given us in this Royal Art Gallery of Truth. There is significance even in the very place where the Picture is hung. We have gone through the Pentateuch—we are well out of this shadowy vestibule of the Law, and at once the advancing eye is met by this grand representation of the Gospel. In this Book we find that the failure is over, and the victory begins. Anticipation becomes realization.

Moreover, it is that Book in our Bible which, more than any other, presents and powerfully illustrates that range of truth which, as by a subtle consent, is attracting the eyes of all Christendom; which has

taken to itself many names—as many as its mountain peaks—but which, as a whole, is covered by one matchless expression of St. Paul, “The fulness of the blessing of [the Gospel of] Christ.”*

It is, indeed, in the awakening of the Church to the clearer recognition of this blessing, that the key is recovered to the right interpretation of the Book of Joshua. To those who have seen Heaven, but no intervening *Heavenlies*—a rest that remaineth, but no rest which the believer *now* enters—it was perfectly natural that Canaan should signify Heaven, and Jordan be simply the river of death. If this were true, there would be little else to be said. There could be no consistent typical meaning in the warfare which followed. Besides, such an application could make nothing of the command to enter the land, the failure to do so, and the consequent anger of God. In fact, it passes by entirely the very points which are so clearly interpreted for us in the New Testament.

One of the ablest of modern writers upon this subject,† after a masterly review of the Exodus, upon reaching the wilderness wanderings, thus disposes of them: “The inevitable falling off of the common hours and experiences, from the level of the moments when our life gets up into the world which was made to be its home, seems to me to be the

* “The Gospel of” is omitted in the best MSS.

† James Baldwin Brown, “The Soul’s Exodus and Pilgrimage.”

great teaching of this passage of Israel's history.' Happily a higher authority has given us a different teaching. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we read, "So we see that they could not enter in" (not because it was inevitable, but) "*because of their unbelief.*" To carry on such an interpretation into the Book of Joshua, were to lose, almost entirely, the warnings, the encouragements, and the manifold lessons which fill its pages. Of course, too little is left to make it an attractive field; so that, in fact, it is represented by little more than a few fragmentary volumes in English Exegesis.*

* In one of these few works, it is only upon the last page of its Appendix that we find how far the author has seen beyond the limits to which he restricted his comments.

"Nor can we ignore the lessons which come to us through a symbolism which we are taught by the Apostle Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. We see, not as a poetic imagination, but as a heavenly instruction, the entrance into Canaan symbolizing the believer's entrance into rest, not the rest of heaven, but the rest which, even here, he has in Jesus Christ. We see that in this rest he may be disturbed by his own lack of faith, the results of which failure will be thorns in his side, and that only by a complete commitment of himself to the will of God will his rest be made perfect. We see, moreover, how our Joshua (Jesus) is the sole guide to this rest, so that as Jesus is both priest and sacrifice, both foundation and builder, so is He both the Rest and the Guide to it. In the light of the New Testament, this Book of Joshua will prove full of spiritual comfort and edification to every seeking believer. God has placed it in the Canon, not to praise Joshua or Israel, but to teach and bless His dear people to the end of time."—*Expository Notes on the Book of Joshua, by Howard Crosby.*

In these pages it is by no means a commentary, and scarcely an exposition, which is attempted; but rather the unfolding of that Truth which is signified both there and elsewhere. The great theme of victory through faith which is here opened has many parts. The Divine Epic which begins in History, reappears in the Psalms as Poetry, in Isaiah as Prophecy, in the teaching of Jesus as the highest of all Philosophy; and, finally, in the Epistles as Experience. So that if proper light is allowed to fall upon our Picture, it must be freely borrowed from the other portions of Scripture. The outline of the subject is so distinctly sketched, however, in the history, as to require little change.

The Book of Joshua would seem to be the special heritage of this generation. The mists that have hung so long around the hills, are rolling off, and many are lifting up rejoicing eyes to see how much more lies beyond them of Christian possibility than they had thought to reach. Surely the day in which we live is one of those set times in which God favors Zion. But while He thus dispels the darkness and gives us clearer light, so that things once unseen or dimly seen, now shine as the day, there may be, with not a few, a personal hindrance remaining;—a veil not taken away in the reading of the New Testament. As the Israelite's veil kept him from seeing to the end of that which was commanded, so may the Christian's veil keep him from seeing to the end of that

which is promised. No struggles of our own, no possible straining of our intellectual vision, can meet this difficulty. "Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."

Meanwhile, working in harmony with the Word and promises of God, there lies a vast power in Christian testimony to convince even veiled eyes of the privileges that await them. It is not often wise for such a testimony to put its own experience in the foreground; and yet without such experience there could be no true testimony or even right knowledge. He who lays the scene of his story in a land of which he has only read and heard, will, with all his care, be sure to betray his ignorance. If he has only visited it, this also will appear. Even as a dweller in the land, there may still be local discrepancies to be detected.

She who ventures in these pages to describe the Land of Blessing, so far as her feet have walked its length and breadth, has found it everywhere a good and glorious land; and she can only hope that what her eyes have missed, or seen mistakenly, will find other and wiser witnesses. She gives this as her simple contribution to the comprehension of all saints.

It is her comfort to consider that it is not theory acutely thought out for which the Church of Christ is now longing, but practical truth, and to know alike from experience and observation that there is a Truth which, whether philosophically discerned or not, can

yet assert its living power in the hearts of the humblest, and against all odds of nature. If others shall find in these pages a joy in the least proportionate to that which she has found in their preparation, it will be to her an unspeakable reward.

CHAPTER I.

THE LAND OF PROMISE.

“**B**EHOLD I HAVE SET THE LAND BEFORE YOU :
GO IN AND POSSESS THE LAND.” (*Deut.* i. 8).

“HE BROUGHT US OUT FROM THENCE, THAT HE
MIGHT BRING US IN, TO GIVE US THE LAND.”
(*Deut.* vi. 23).

Before taking up the lessons of the Book of Joshua, we need to review the history which precedes it, so far as respects the promise made to the Israelites of the land of Canaan, and their failure to accept it.

The full scope of their redemption was two-fold—*out* of Egypt and *into* Canaan ; but the latter was always the more prominent.

In the earliest promise made to Moses, we read, “I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, into a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.”* When the first promise had been fulfilled, and they sang their song of deliverance upon the shores of the Red Sea, their faith rose at once to claim the second, as the completion

* Exodus iii. 8.

of their triumph: "*Thou shalt bring them in and plant them in the mountain of their inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.*"*

Yet, closely as the two events are linked in promise, there was an intermediate stage between them. Egypt did not border upon Canaan, and, therefore, it could not be a single experience to be brought out, and to be brought in. Furthermore, the Lord did not choose to lead His people by the shortest possible way. Long before their unbelief had caused the forty years of wandering, we see a wise delay which is fully explained. "And it came to pass that when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not thro' the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near, for God said lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt; but God *led the people about* through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea."†

And again, the Red Sea crossed, we do not yet find the shortest route to Caanan chosen. They were led down to the back side of the desert, nearly to the end of Arabia, to that mysterious land where God has chosen to train and discipline so many; where Moses spent his forty years of preparation; where Elijah went on his long journey, and where Paul also

* Exodus xv. 17.

† Exodus xiii. 17, 18.

was sent for his secret training. This new-born nation had everything to learn, and Canaan would have been wasted upon its ignorance. So they were led down to Horeb, there to receive the Law from Sinai, and there to be trained as an encampment around the sacred Tabernacle.

The books of Exodus and Leviticus give us thirteen months of such a history. It is resumed in Numbers with the preparations for an advance "on the first day of the second month of the second year."* The voice of God now called them onward. "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount; turn you and take your journey. . . . Behold, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land."† The length of the journey before them is stated, with precision, as eleven days from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea, the place where they were to enter.‡

But now began delays which God had not ordered. They lusted for flesh, and for two days they stopped to gather quails; and then for a whole month to dig the graves of them that lusted. Again, Miriam speaks against Moses; she is not prepared to see the low exalted in these patterns of grace, and the alien made as the home-born—much less to see her own brother stoop from the leadership of a great nation to place by his side an Ethiopian woman. Therefore she is smitten with leprosy, and the whole camp

* Numbers i. 1.

† Deut. i. 6-8.

‡ Deut. i. 2.

must wait seven days until she can rejoin them. In these and other ways the journey was prolonged for months, since, when they reached the land it was the time of the vintage. But while the delay was theirs, the way itself was God's, as we learn from the review of it which Moses gave :—" When we departed from Horeb, we went *through all that great and terrible wilderness* as the Lord our God commanded us ; and we came to Kadesh Barnea."*

Standing at last upon the border of the land, they should have entered it at once. Instead of this, we find another delay which, begging for only forty days, was recompensed with forty years. In Numbers we read that the Lord spake unto Moses, directing him to send the spies.† But in Deuteronomy, we learn that it was only a command accommodated to their choice, as so carefully stated by Moses : " I said unto you, ' Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto us. Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee : go up and possess it as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee ; fear not, neither be discouraged.' And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, ' We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land and bring us word again by what way we must go up and into what cities we shall come.' "‡ As afterwards, in giving them a king,

* Deut. i. 19.

† Numbers, xiii. 1, 2.

‡ Deut. i. 20-22.

God yielded to *their* choice since they would not accept *His*.*

The report of the spies resulted in the failure to enter the land, and thus, for a long season, their life became abnormal—outside of the true plan of God, though not beyond His merciful care.† Leaving this failure as the subject of the following chapter, and pausing at that point when the possession of the land was brought within their immediate reach, let us seek the lesson here signified; for “all *these* things happened unto them for ensamples.”

The scope of our redemption also is two-fold—“God hath saved us *and* called us with an holy calling.”‡ This salvation and this calling are always coupled in the promises of God, and yet must be wrought out at

* 1 Sam. viii. 9.

† “If the Israelites had gone on to Canaan without inquiry, their confidence had possessed it. Now they send to espy the land; six hundred thousand never lived to see it: and yet I see God enjoining it upon them to send; but enjoining it upon their instance. Some things God allows in judgment: their importunity and distrust extorted from God this occasion of their overthrow. That which the Lord moves unto prospers; but that which we move Him to first seldom succeedeth. What *needed* they doubt of the goodness of that land which God told them did flow with milk and honey? What *needed* they doubt obtaining that which God promised to give? When we will send forth our senses to be our scouts in the matters of faith, and rather dare trust men than God, we are worthy to be deceived.”—*Bishop Hall's Contemplations*.

‡ 2 Tim. i. 9.

separate stages. But as He brought them out *that* He might bring them in,* so we find the main stress of the Gospel falling upon this ultimate design. The Scriptures speak not so much of what we are saved *from* as of what we are saved *unto*; and even the very word salvation is sometimes limited to the latter meaning.

Such has not been, however, the most current teaching of the Church. Her efforts have been concentrated far more upon the conversion of sinners than the nurture of the saints. We have had, consequently, more fishers of men than shepherds who could feed the flock, and justification has been more frequently and fully presented than sanctification.† We have

* Deut. vi. 23.

† Dr. Crawford, in his able work on the "Atonement," thus writes: "The mediatorial work and sufferings of Jesus Christ were intended, not only to obtain for us redemption from the guilt and penal consequences of sin, *but also to secure our personal sanctification.*"

"This is a truth which has too frequently been overlooked. In speaking or thinking of the salvation which Christ has purchased, there are many who seem to attach to it no further idea than that of mere *deliverance from condemnation*. They forget that *deliverance from sin*—the cause of condemnation—is a no less important blessing comprehended in it. . . .

"Nay, it would seem as if *the former* of these deliverances—that is to say, our deliverance from sin itself—were represented in some passages of Scriptures as the grand and ultimate consummation of redeeming grace, to which *the latter*, though in itself inestimably precious and important, is preparatory. Witness these plain and forcible declarations: 'He died for all, that

reversed the proportions which are so apparent in the Epistles. St. Paul does not tell us so much of his anxiety to reach the hardened, as he does of his desire to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Respecting that, he tells us, "Whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working which worketh in me mightily."* He does not speak of the prayers of Epaphras for those without, but he writes of his fervent prayers for those within, that they "might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."† The five prayers of his own, which are given at some

they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again. 'Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, *that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, and that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*' 'You that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, *to present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouvable in His sight.*' 'He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.' 'The blood of Jesus, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God, shall purge your conscience from dead works, *to serve the living God.*' 'Who His ownself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, *that we being dead to sins, might live unto righteousness.*' These statements seem to indicate that our redemption from the guilt and penal consequences of sin, was intended to be the means to an ulterior end—that end being our personal sanctification."—*The Doctrine of Holy Scripture respecting the Atonement*, pp. 194, 195.

* Col. i. 28, 29.

† Col. iv. 12.

length, all have a common burden—that the Church may see and receive the fulness of Christ. So, also, in the list of special gifts, he dwells in detail only upon those which have these objects—"the perfecting of the saints; the work of the ministry; the edifying of the body of Christ." *

As we turn to the words of Christ, we find in that one most precious prayer of His which is left us, that He says expressly, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given Me;" † and what a prayer!—that they might have all His joy, His love, His glory!

It is not—God forbid the thought!—that the Scriptures slight the salvation of any soul. But as it would have been little to the glory of God to have merely brought the people out of Egypt without giving them a home, so are we shown that Christ is only fully glorified in the glory of His Church. The Household of Faith is regarded as a family in which the responsibilities are not ended by the birth of the children. That any of them should remain unfed, sickly, dwarfed, is not for a moment to be allowed. Their nurture and full development is the one great object of the true Father.

Again, we find a wrong impression prevalent as to what this Sanctification signifies. There are many who strongly urge its claims, but see in it only a

* Eph. iv. 12.

† John xvii. 9.

further deliverance, as it is so often expressed, from the power as well as from the guilt of sin.

But *Sanctification is not so much a removal as an impartation*. That which Christ takes from us is as nothing to that which He gives us; and it is this positive, rather than the negative, side of the truth, which the Scriptures everywhere present, and which is most clearly set forth in this type of the call to Canaan. It was a bestowment, an inheritance, a foreshadowing of all those spiritual blessings with which God has blessed us in Jesus Christ.

Few Christians are without a vague sense of *something* good that is set before them. But there is immense gain in its clearer comprehension. Let us, therefore, look more definitely at that which the Holy Ghost has signified in this instance.

The entering of the Land of Promise is spoken of frequently as entering into *Rest*. Settlement was to take the place of constant change. It was to be a Home, which the desert could not be; for, apart from its failure to supply their needs, everything was transient, and it was useless to plant or build in a land through which they were only journeying. And the contrast was made stronger from the fact that they were spared the weary waiting of preparation. God set before them, in His promise, a Home where all was ready for their coming,—“Great and goodly cities, which thou buildest not, and houses full of all good things which thou filledst not, and wells digged which

thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive-trees which thou plantedst not."*

And in such rest as this might every one of those families of Israel have been found speedily; and not only in Rest, but in the satisfying Bounty which it implied. What a contrast was that which awaited them, from the old life of Egypt. Weary hands that made the bricks, tired feet that watered the dry land, now at rest with only healthy toil, and the poor slaves lifted up from the very dung-hill to sit like princes in their pleasant homes among the hills and valleys—their hunger satisfied with better things than the coarse food of Egypt—with better things than manna even—with corn and oil, and honey and wine, and all else that could strengthen, and enrich, and sweeten, and cheer their life.

It was true that enemies filled the Land, and that warfare also awaited them. But had not God promised to deal with these seven nations even as He dealt with Pharaoh, and would He not do it? So, then, it was not so much warfare as Victory of which God spoke. Therefore no fear, no discouragement was to dampen their ardent hopes as they passed on their way to *Rest*, and *Wealth*, and *Triumph*.

And to Rest, and unsearchable Riches, and a great Victory, are we also called, finding them all in the Lord Jesus. He is Himself the anti-type of that good land and large. Our calling is, to be "*in Christ*."

* Deut. vi. 10, 11.

The first and deepest need of our being is rest. St. Augustine among all his sayings, has none sweeter or stronger than this, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it rests in Thee."*

But there is a saying that surpasses this; it is the call of Christ to all the children of men, soft and soothing as a mother's lullaby, "Come unto Me, and I will rest you." It is rest first, and after that all else that He holds for us.

Nor is it rest as opposed only to the toil of sin, but also the unrest of Christian activity. Our Rest should be like our Sabbath, a beginning of the days. Under the Law, as still under all Legality, the order was, work at the first, and day after day until the seventh, when the labor shall end in rest. But when Christ rose from the dead, that first day of the week became the hallowed one, consecrated to rest, and life, and joy. And from that living, joyful rest in Him, the whole being energized and fitted for its task, the soul can go on to serve Him to the end. It has found rest because it has ceased from working in its own strength, ceased from its own will, and now God worketh in it to will and to do of His good pleasure. Practically, it makes the widest possible difference whether we work up to rest or from it.

* Fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te. . . . Quies est apud te valde et vita imperturbabilis. Qui intrat in te, *intrat in gaudium Domini Sui*; et non timebit, et habebit se optime in optimo.—*Confess., Lib. I. 1, and II. 18.*

When this rest has preceded our work, it will also permeate it, and will render it calm, undistracted, unoppressive. It has been said, "Faith rests while it works. This is a peculiarity of the true Gospel. No false religion could teach it. Many professed disciples of Christ Himself—men to whom the name of religious persons can not be denied—never learn it. True faith rests habitually, rests in working. It is a paradox; but a paradox full of truth, full of beauty, full of admonition." *

This rest can be ours in no other way than as a gift from Christ. Such deep repose of soul is neither found in man, nor can be evolved out of any of his powers. Only as the strong and loving arms of Jesus are folded around it, shall the tired and tossed soul be rested.

Is the heart burdened still at times with the weight of old sins? Are there seasons when "the spirit of fret and fuss" disorder it? Is it strained with anxieties? Is its work ever a weariness? Above all, has it wandered like a wayward child into forbidden paths, and found no shelter? Such a soul needs not that any should tell it that it has not yet come to the rest which God has promised—that, more or less, it is falling short of it. How far short, we can tell best by looking at the Divine copy of it—Jesus Himself.

In studying that life in its *human* aspects, we do not behold the favorite of Fortune, nor the creature of circumstances. The rest of Jesus was conditioned

* Voices of the Prophets, C. J. Vaughan, D.D., p. 81.

by nothing outward. But we trace a silent power that ruled His whole being, the poise of a human spirit in perfect harmony with the will of God—ever going forth to meet that will, and never waiting to be overtaken by it. Calm in His most crowded work, calm in every peril, calm in His utmost suffering and agony, never for a moment excited, unbalanced, fevered or fretted—this is He who still calls, “*Come unto Me, and I will rest you.*” How much is signified in that promise we can not know, except as Christian expectation passes into experience.

But rest is not the only hope of our calling. We are promised the supply of all our need ; not only of such wants as we now feel, but of those also which shall be first awakened by the sight of unbounded treasure. Certainly if anything is clear in the Word of God it is this bounty. The “Unsearchable Riches of Christ” is a cognomen of the Gospel. All riches of the full assurance of understanding, all that can nourish and adorn, encompass with comforts and develop this new spiritual life, all possible wealth of grace and love,—all these spiritual blessings are given us “*in the heavenlies*” in Christ Jesus. Nor is the least portion of this wealth the privilege of sharing it with others, and of making it even more blessed to give than to receive—by such a law excluding all possible satiety, and providing ever-enlarged powers of enjoyment. In brief, the promise runs, “All things are yours ;” and the eager soul, escaping from the

poverty of its bondage, looks on confidently to a day nigh at hand when it shall have no want unsatisfied.

But with these promises of Rest and Riches there is linked a third—of Victory. At first the soul has little thought of enemies, save such as it has already known. Pharaoh and the hosts of Egypt, from these it fled; from the despotism of Satan and the low bondage of this world. God, ordinarily, shields the newly-converted soul from the sight of struggles beyond, leading it about by other easier ways, and letting its thought be concentrated, for a time, on the great facts of forgiveness and deliverance. Its first fears come from the pursuing foes; but so signal is the overthrow of these, that even the certainty of seven mightier nations before it can bring no terror. To Faith, the future is as sure as the past, and the whole process of victory appears like one continuous work of God. Like Israel upon the seashore, even while we are singing to the Lord who hath triumphed gloriously, we go on to celebrate the whole. "The people shall hear and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina—*all* the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away."* That God should save us from the hands of one enemy to let us fall into the hands of another, is simply inconceivable to a child-like faith.

The completeness of this victory has been described for us in one of the holy songs that heralded the

* Exodus xv. 14, 15.

coming of Christ, when Zacharias tells us that God would grant us—"that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him *without fear*, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life."* And this he calls, first, God's promise, and then, His covenant, and, finally, His oath,† so giving us three immutable securities.

The nature of these enemies and the secret of this victory, will need to be considered in another connection; but, meanwhile, this may be assumed as the proper position in which the Gospel places us.—"Now thanks be unto God who *always* causeth us to triumph in Christ."

Such is the Land of Promise set before us. It is, indeed, the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. Probably no Christian ever entered at once upon such an inheritance. Apart from the gracious shielding from our foes, already alluded to, there are still other reasons why the Lord for awhile should lead us about. Some one has said that it takes God much longer to prepare us for a blessing, than it does to give it when we are ready to receive it. It is in perfect harmony with the processes of all lower life, that our spiritual life should have a space allowed for development and training. When Jesus had compassion on the shepherdless multitude, all that even He could do for them was to *begin* to teach them many things. And He had taught His own disciples

* Luke i. 74, 75.

† Luke i. 72, 73.

for years when He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye can not bear them now."

As they stood around Sinai to receive the Law, so do we need to gather around Jesus as He sits upon another mountain, making that old Law new, and giving us, not the curse, but the blessing. All knowledge requires time for its acquisition; but Christian knowledge demands it still more, since it is valueless until it becomes experimental.

Again, there are certain steps which we must take before any marked advance can be made. The lessons in the first chapter of Numbers are full of meaning to us. The people were required to declare their pedigree,* and to be enrolled under their proper standards. Before we attempt to reach this fulness of

* "Can I declare my pedigree? It is greatly to be feared there are hundreds, if not thousands, of professing Christians who are wholly incompetent to do so. They can not say with clearness and decision, '*Now are we the sons of God*' (1 John iii. 2). '*Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise*' (Gal. iii. 26-29). '*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*' '*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God*' (Rom. viii. 14, 16).

"This is the Christian's 'pedigree,' and it is his privilege to be able to 'declare' it. He is born from above—born again—born of water and the spirit; *i. e.*, by the word and by the Holy Ghost (compare, diligently, John iii. 5; James i. 18; 1 Peter i. 23; Eph. v. 26). The believer traces his pedigree directly up to a risen Christ in glory. This is Christian genealogy."—*Notes on the Book of Numbers*, by C. H. M., pp. 8, 9.

blessing, our sonship must become an established fact—the Spirit of God bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God ; and as distinctly must we have accepted the warfare and the service to which He calls us. None can be counted in that army till he can say, “ Whose I am and whom I serve.”

The importance of this can not be too strongly stated, so large is the proportion of those who are in doubt, at times, as to their being really the children of God.

But, again, how true to the history of Israel are the hindrances which we ourselves occasion—true even to their very character. It is still by demanding the visible in the place of the Invisible, that we begin to fall from our faith. And then it is by the lust of other things entering in—the revival of some old desire. And yet again by presuming to speak against those whom God has set over us.

But none of these begin to compare, in their consequences, with that sin of unbelief by which the Land was forfeited. And that sin, as we see in the type, began by what might be termed *experimenting upon God's word*—looking at the human chances for His promise holding good. They overlooked the fact made so clear in this promise, that the redemption and the inheritance were equally God's work and gift. “ They soon forgot His word ;” and at the root of this forgetfulness lay that self-sufficiency which was finally to issue in despair. Such has ever been

the working of the human heart ; and because of this tendency such care is taken in the presentation of the Gospel to convince us that, as forgiveness is not of the Law, no more is our righteousness, but equally with that a gift, and by grace.

Sanctification is by faith as truly and fully as is justification. The voice that lifted Luther from his weary climbing of the stair-way, saying, "The just shall live by faith," was a voice calling to all Christendom through him. And it needs that same voice of God to rouse the weary climbers up their arduous way, and to make the bowed spirits of thousands exultant with hope. Yet it needs no new message ; for of the life more abundantly, as well as of the least that can be called life, is it true that "the just shall live by faith." "Through faith that is in Me," was the sole condition announced by the Lord Jesus, as covering not only "forgiveness of sins," but an "inheritance among them which are sanctified." *

This Land of Promise to which we are thus so clearly called in the Lord Jesus Christ—this fulness of blessing—is it, or is it not, the prevalent experience of Christians? Have they so believed, that while looking on to the glorious appearing of Christ as the completion of their hope, and the final triumph, they have in the meantime entered into *this* rest?

And if in answer to this a charge must be brought against not a few of the children of God, let it be

* Acts xxvi. 18.

done in the charity that *hopeth* all things, and that seeks only to help those whom an enemy hath hindered.

A leading divine in the Church of England has said plainly, what is, doubtless, quite as applicable to our own land as to his, "The impression has been that people knew everything about Christian duty, and have no need to be enlightened on that head. And if by Christian duty be meant simply the moral law of God, in its outward, literal aspect, perhaps the impression is, more or less, correct, at least as regards the educated classes. But if by Christian duty be meant sanctity of life and character, and a growing conformity to the image of the Lord Jesus, we must be pardoned for expressing our conviction, that our best and most respectable congregations have very little insight into the thing itself, and still less into the method of its attainment." *

Such shortcoming as is here spoken of, is the less likely to be usually regretted, as the true standard is so rarely presented. But seeking that standard in the Scriptures, turning fresh from its glowing presentation of Christ and His fulness, surely all will admit that it is not merely an exception, but a rare one, to see any such state of blessedness in actual life.

There are many who *believe in* such fulness, and dare not let go their faith in it; but they are com-

* "Thoughts on Personal Religion," by Edward Meyrick Goulburn, D.D., p. 12.

pelled to confess that they have not found it. There are many who have seen it with their eyes, and reached out eager hands to it; but they do not hold it. They strive, they wrestle; but it seems ever to elude them. The ideal does not become the real, and "the *there* is never *here*."

Christians grow reconciled to a state which has become so common, and then from concluding it to be a universal experience, they end by regarding it as a necessity.

But such can never be the earliest expectation of a soul that has heard for itself, and from Jesus, the call to come unto Him. Every one who has heard that call, knew that it was "to glory and virtue;" and that as surely as the land of Canaan was set before the Israelites, while God said, "Go up and possess it," so surely has His Voice come to our hearts, saying, "Go up into the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, where I will bless you with all spiritual blessings. Go up and possess the peace that passeth understanding, even perfect peace. Go up and dwell in Christ, and, therefore, dwell in love, a perfect love, that casteth out all fear. Go up and be filled with all the fulness of God. Go up and always triumph in Christ Jesus."

And now falling back upon our allegory, let us venture, for the sake of an illustration, to add to it a simple fable.

Suli, an Egyptian philosopher, is returning home from a long journey, and in crossing the *désert*, suddenly comes upon the camp of the Israelites. It is a little over a year since they left his own land, but he has not heard of it, and is full of wonder. In no unfriendly spirit he enters the tent of a man whom he had once known as a slave, now a prince among his people, Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, the head of the tribe of Judah.* He sits down and listens with profound interest to the account of the plagues; of the last fearful night; the sprinkled blood and the Pass-over Lamb; the crossing of the Red Sea on foot, and the drowning of all their pursuers. He is told also of the discipline and training of the people. The giving of the Law at Sinai is described, and the significance of their worship. Full of astonishment, it is now his turn to speak.

“Marvel not, O Nahshon, that thy servant is well-nigh silent with astonishment. No tale like this hath mine ear ever heard. And not the least wonderful of all is that which mine own eyes can see, the change in the people themselves. I doubt not these words of thine concerning any of those great wonders. And yet this is the miracle to me: When I set out from Egypt but two years since, you were, as thou thyself knowest, a most abject people. And I find you here a well-governed nation—an army trained for the battle. Truly, O Nahshon, thy people

* Num. i. 7.

deserve this freedom. But now let me ask of thee your purpose for the future. You can not surely live always in this desert, and I see you are still journeying."

"I have yet to tell thee of this, O Suli," replies the Prince, "as the chief thing of all. A good land and large has been given us. The land of Canaan was promised to our father Abraham hundreds of years since, and the promise repeated to his heirs Isaac and Jacob. And when the Lord first spake of our deliverance to Moses, He told him precisely how He would first bring us out of Egypt, and then into Canaan. Having performed the one, He is now preparing for the other; and though we have by our waywardness hindered Him, yet we are now upon the very eve of entering the Land."

"But art thou, O Nahshon, *sure* of this? Dost thou not fear the struggle? I have myself passed through the land, and the tribes holding it are fierce and strong. They are well-armed, and have walled cities. It is true, the country is exceedingly fair and fertile. It could not well be better suited to your wants, but pardon thy servant, O Nahshon, if he can but doubt if you ever come to possess it. What, then, if you should fail? What other plan have you to fall back upon? Is there still any other country where you could get a foothold?"

"We were never promised any other, and as we have so long been promised this, we can see no possi-

ble reason why we should not get it. It is not at all more impossible than our rescue from Egypt. And were it, O Suli, even tenfold harder than thou thinkest, it would matter naught, for our God never makes a promise which He can not keep."

"But still, in case you should fail, which wouldst thou judge to be wisest—to go back to Egypt, or attempt to live in this desert?"

"We shall never return to Egypt. Thinkest thou, O Suli, that we could at all endure its bondage now? And as for this desert, it is only a place to pass through. We have learned from its hardships, both self-denial and faith in God. But surely we could never become what we are told we shall be, with such surroundings. Besides, it would be out of all keeping with the ways of our God. However, we need not consider such a case. Verily, O Suli, I do wrong to even suppose it. As our father Abraham has said, *'What God has promised He is able also to perform!'*"

"This, then, is thy thought, O Nahshon, that your Helper is so mighty that there is no need to think at all of your own weakness. Thy trust in thy God is sublime indeed. But tell thy servant,—are there no conditions? Is there nothing left to yourselves to fulfil, so that a chance of failure remaineth after all?"

"Yes, Suli, there are conditions, yet not of our strength, but simply of our faith in God. He might delay His promise, or even break it if we failed to

trust Him. But how could that ever happen? We have had so many proofs of what He is and of what He does, that to begin now to doubt whether He will keep His word or not, were to deny almost His very being—a God of Truth and a God of all Power. As I said before, so say I now again, O Suli, ‘WHAT GOD HAS PROMISED HE IS ABLE ALSO TO PERFORM.’ ”

CHAPTER II.

THE FAILURE OF UNBELIEF.

“SO WE SEE THAT THEY COULD NOT ENTER
IN BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF.”—(*Heb. iii. 19.*)

The men to whom the searching of the land was entrusted were no ordinary spies. Chosen from each of the tribes, they were all “heads of the children of Israel”—“every one a ruler.” “So they went up and searched the land ;”^{*} and a search that extended through forty days must have been a thorough one. From north to south they saw with wondering eyes such bounties as they had never seen before. They passed on to the shores of the great sea. They beheld Lebanon and its cedars. They rested before the peaks of Hermon and Carmel. They followed the bed of the Jordan from the beautiful lake where it is born, to that sea in which it dies. They marked the countless hills and valleys, and the multitude of brooks. They saw, also, their enemies, the strongholds, and the very giants. They went to the graves of their fathers at Hebron, and saw there in that old city the three sons of Anak, whose names are so singularly preserved.[†]

One can but listen in imagination to the talk of

^{*} Num. xiii. 21.

[†] Num. xiii. 22.

these men as they journey over those hills. What outbursts of joy—what sighs of dismay! What reasoning in their hearts, and what constant interchange of hopes and fears!

And now they have returned, and the whole congregation, with Moses and Aaron at their head, stand around, ready to listen to the travellers. “Beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings;” and blessed might their feet have been that day. There is a hush of expectation: “We came into the land and surely it floweth with milk and honey;” and then, slowly lifting that heavy cluster of grapes of Eshcol from the staff resting upon the shoulders of two of them, and upraising it in the sight of all,—“This is the fruit of it!”* What visions of plenty are swimming before all those straining eyes! How the little children even clap their hands for joy!

But listen, the men have not told all! “Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great; and, moreover, we saw the children of Anak there.” And now, with a minuteness not given to the other side of the picture, they go on to describe their enemies: “The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and by the coast of Jordan.”†

* Num. xiii. 27.

† Num. xiii. 28, 29.

At once all those eager faces are downcast, and murmurs and cries are heard. And why should they not fear? These men who speak are their rulers—their leaders. If such are terrified, why not they? Therefore, it seems a decisive voice—a voice of authority. But now Caleb, who has claimed by faith his own possession, and knows better than any what foes they have to meet, stands forth to still the people: “Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.”* By his side is Joshua, but they are only two, and the ten again repeat: “We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.”† And now they forget all else, and their fears swollen by this tide of popular feeling, they go on to present the darkest possible picture, which, as truthful men, they could venture to give: “The land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight!”‡

O Princes of Israel! if only as ye went upon your way, ye had bethought yourselves to sing once more the song ye once sang so well: “All the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Thy right hand, O Lord, is glorious in power!”§ But no, they for-

* Num. xiii. 32. † Num. xiii. 31. ‡ Num. xiii. 33. § Ex. xv.

got even to make mention of His name. They saw only themselves and their enemies; and so seeing, it was but a slight hyperbole to draw the contrast of grasshoppers and giants. They had lost sight of the Lord. Had they only lost sight of themselves, while they looked to Him, how different had been the contrast—no longer between grasshoppers and giants, but between giants and God! Would the feet of a giant fall heavily upon the grasshopper in his path? Much more would the strongest enemy melt away before the advancing feet of the Lord strong and mighty! And herein it was “an evil report” rather than a false one, that it ignored God—His promise and His power.

All that night throughout the vast camp, lying down but the night before to happy dreams of the land so close before them, is heard the sound of weeping.* And well may they weep, since they had lost that buoyant hope. The terror and grief become at last a panic. As the strong men look upon their wives and children, who give way to still more violent emotion, they ask, with indignation, “Are these to be a prey? Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?”† And at once the bold decision is made by which they take themselves out of God’s hand—“Let us make a Captain and let us return into Egypt.”

* Num. xiv. 1.

† Num. xiv. 3, 4.

But who shall be the Captain to lead them back? Not Moses, not Aaron. They are fallen flat upon their faces before all the people. Meanwhile, Joshua and Caleb make another attempt to rally the host. "The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not."* The bravest and noblest words that ever came to rally a panic-stricken host! Yet they only vex and anger the people. And for standing there and saying no new thing, saying only what God had always said, they well-nigh met the fate of Stephen—"All the congregation bade stone them with stones."†

But another voice is heard. As they look up, before all their eyes, shining from out the Tabernacle, appears the glory of the Lord. He speaks to Moses: "How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?"‡ In these words we see at once their real offence, and what sin of sins it was that stirred Him thus. Even at their last rebellion it was something deeper than their lust that had chiefly grieved Him; for "a fire was kindled

* Num. xiv. 7-9.

† Num. xiv. 10.

‡ Num. xiv. 11.

against Jacob, and anger came up against Israel, *because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation.*" * But this word of God which they believed not now, was a word so often given, so old, so ever new, that not to believe it was, indeed, to deny Him. What marvel that He said to Moses, "I will disinherit them!" The sublime pleading of Moses with his God, that unworthy as the people were, He would yet regard His own honor among the heathen, won at last the gracious answer, "I have pardoned according to thy word." † But Pardon more often wisely includes chastisement, than excludes it; and even because He kept them as His children, must His hand be heavy upon them. Ten times the men who had seen His glory, and all His signs, had tempted Him. ‡ Their trial was complete. They could not see the land.—"To-morrow turn you and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea."

And, so saying, He did but take them at their own word. They would not believe His Word, therefore their own should come to pass—"As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in my ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. . . . Doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which, I swore to make you dwell therein. . . . And ye shall know my breach of promise." §

* Ps. lxxviii. 19-22.

† Num. xiv. 20.

‡ Num. xiv. 22.

§ Num. xiv. 28-34.

Slowly, but surely, the weary length of forty years, were more than half a million of men to whom God had given a home in Canaan, to find their graves in the sand of the desert. There was little to break the monotony of that nomad existence; but one toil never ceased. Day after day, they carried forth out of their camp the score or more of corpses of soldiers, who had fallen, not in battle, but because of their unbelief.

A still sadder doom was assigned to the ten spies. We justly count among the sins of darkest dye the deliberate slander of a fellow-being. But these men had slandered God. Upon the face of it, it was only an evil report against the land. But in reality it was charging God both with untruthfulness and inefficiency: and for such a sin as this, "they died by the plague before the Lord."*

Finally, we find that presumption takes the place of faith. They recognize at last their fearful mistake, but not to humbly repent of it. Only their strong and stubborn wills refuse the punishment. Going up against their enemies to be smitten and discomfited, they have to learn that not a step is safe unless God go before them.

Forty years in the wilderness! For forty years grieving the Lord, and chastened by Him! And yet even this is used to show forth His long-suffering and goodness—"Being full of compassion," not even then did He "stir up all His wrath."

* Num. xiv. 37.

There is a brief review of this period in the Acts, which forms a most interesting sequel to a statement of Moses. The latter, in reviewing the period *previous* to the provocation, says to the people: "Thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went until ye came unto this place."* The Apostle Paul takes the same view of the *entire* period. "And about the time of forty years, even as a nurse beareth her child, so bare He them through the wilderness.†"

So they were still His people—fed, guided, and defended by Him; and possibly abusing these very mercies, in concluding that even by these they might measure the lightness of their offence.

We might well suppose such a lesson as this history furnishes to be too significant for the Scriptures to be silent respecting it. It is, in fact, one of the most clearly applied among all these allegorical events. Unquestionably it is the key-note of the

* Deut. i. 31.

† Acts xiii. 18. "The beauty of this metaphor has been lost to the authorized version on account of the reading (ἐτροποφόρησεν instead of ἐτροφοφόρησεν) adopted in the Textus Receptus. Griesbach, Scholz, and Lachman restored the latter reading on the authority of the Uncial MSS., A. C. E. We regret to see that Tischendorf has reinstated the former reading (because it has a somewhat greater weight of MSS. of the Greek Testament in its favor) without taking into account the evident allusion to Deut. i. 31, where τροφοφόρησαι is acknowledged to be the correct reading."—*Conybeare and Howson's Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. i. chap. vi.

Epistle to the Hebrews, and with what distinctness is it announced : —“ With whom was He grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest.” *

Alas! that the *any* for whom He feared should ever mean the *many*—that a time should come when the majority of Christians—the great mass of them, indeed—should at least *seem* to come short of this fulness of blessing. We believe them to be children of God—for they have known the sprinkling of the blood of the Lamb, and have come out from the world into new life in Christ Jesus. They have been at Sinai and have listened to the Law, and have come up more or less fully to its moral standard. But beyond their present experience lie half the promises of God, and by far the more glorious half yet unfulfilled. No one could venture to claim that the rich gifts of God, even to all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, are in the general posses-

* Heb. iii. 17--iv. 3.

sion of the Church. *The spirituality of Christians does not satisfy themselves*, even according to their own low standard.

There is a class of teachers who distinguish very widely between our *standing* and our *state*; claiming that however it may be as to the latter, any one who is in Christ at all *has*, by reason of the former, all these blessings. But it is this practical difference, phrase it as we may, that is so emphasized in Holy Scripture. It was a difference wide enough between promise and possession, to call forth God's utter displeasure of old. It is a difference wide enough now, between what He has *given* us in Christ, and what we have *received* in Him, to leave room for holy fear of exceeding loss. The poor man may *call* himself rich the moment he hears of the estate bequeathed him; but it still profits him nothing till he has obtained it; as we find, indeed, the bequest itself declares: "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, *that* have I given unto you."

There is, however, another distinction to be drawn between the Travellers and the Wanderers; between the Travellers following Him who leadeth them about even with all their lingering, and who will speedily bring them to the Border of the Land; and the Wanderers turning back in unbelief and disobedience to spend all their lives in that wilderness—*always* coming short.

As to the manner of this failure, the analogy is very

close between theirs and ours. It came about then, by their pausing to prove the promises of God by human opinion. When God said, "Go up all of you and possess the land," they said, "Nay, but we will let twelve of our foremost men go up first, and bring us word about it, and we will abide by their judgment." And it is still, through leaning to the word of man, instead of listening singly to the voice of God, that we expose ourselves to further temptation.

But how justly responsible were they held, who let their own faithless fears turn back the multitude! Do the ministers of Christ, indeed, understand what it means to be set for the defence of the Gospel? Do they all remember that only as they are taught by the Holy Spirit, can they possibly teach spiritual truth? Do not some of them assume the guidance of immortal souls, when with a like lack of knowledge they would never dream of steering a ship upon the seas?

And what is the report which they bring of our Land of Promise? As they stand before the people, do they cheer them on, by telling them what good things are in reserve for them, and how sure God is to give them to all that seek?

We touch upon a most vital theme when we ask, What is the ministry of this age?

There is one sort more prevalent than is suspected, in which Christ and His doctrines are made subordinate—often one may hope unconsciously—to philoso-

phy, erudition, and rhetoric. The only place which is left for the Gospel, is that of a prologue, or a peroration, or sometimes even a parenthesis. The sadness of it is, that such sermons are often preached with much acceptance; and the sorrow of it is, they are sometimes preached by, apparently, earnest and sincere men, who are trammelled by training, or what they suppose to be the demands of the age. They are men it may be of many gifts; but none the less is the hearer left like the poor starved Traveller in the fable, who found a pilgrim's pouch beside a well, and cried, "Here is my food!" but as he opened it, he sighed, "Alas! they are only pearls!" O ye who teach the people,—tricking out the Truth of God in all your finery that she may pass with credit—trust her in her white-robed simplicity. Have you not sometimes seen with shame how the homely, wholesome barley-loaf was eagerly eaten, when all your fine confections failed!

But passing by this class, and coming to the devoted men who *desire* to be utterly faithful in their stewardship—do *they* tell of these spiritual privileges? Do they seek — "*striving mightily*" — to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus? Do not even these falter? Or, if the fulness of Christ be proclaimed, is it not often as a study for our admiration? If the beauty of holiness be delineated, is it not as one of the lost Arts? Is it often preached not only as a possible, but a probable attainment?

There is a reason for this neglect, which may be assigned the more freely, as it would be the reason often given by God's servants themselves—that they have no such experience; and that they can not really expect their hearers to be influenced by mere precept. A joint reason might be added, that they do not see around them the living examples of such truth.

At the same time there can be little doubt that many most honestly hold back, because they have proved some flaw in the teaching, or some falsity in the life, of those who have attempted to present the higher truths of the Gospel. They are thus far right, that of all shams, that of Sanctification is the most sickening—of all hollow pretences, that of holiness is most fearful. But all falsities, all crudities, by which man may surround the Truth, do not for a moment make that Truth itself less real or less lovely.

Of old, they were ten against two, who brought the evil report, and discouraged the hearts of the people. What a warning against being guided by majorities in the things of God, or entrusting His cause to a human jury! Has He not said, "Let God be true and *every man* a liar!"

Yet the Lord does not so leave His truth to be utterly deserted. He had His two witnesses even then. And who now ever cares to remember those other ten? Their names are put on record, but are read unheeded—Caleb and Joshua are alone remembered and honored. Their nobility and their fidelity

make every kindred chord throughout our hearts to vibrate. Surely no other two than they could have borne upon their shoulders those grapes of Eshcol! Bringing their good report they brought its proof also. The Lord be praised that He ever reserves such witnesses. In every age there have been those who not only spoke glorious things of the City of God, but showed in their lives the choicest fruits of the Spirit. True, men instead of tasting their grapes, try to stone them with stones. They are ready to fling their hard thoughts and hard speeches against them for a time, but in the end they trust them.

But while such is the responsibility of the leaders of the people, there is another resting upon all. It is no real excuse to say as they did of old, "Our brethren have discouraged our heart," since our responsibility is this:—"Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God."

There are few Christians who appear to understand how fatal a sin is distrust. They are very apt to regard it as at worst an amiable weakness, while the real stamp of it is this: "*He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar.*"* We try to disguise this doubting of God and His Word, by claiming that it is only doubt of ourselves; that in our case, God's Word still remaining true, there are such very practical difficulties that it can not be fulfilled; forgetting that these promises of God were addressed to man *as*

* 1 John v. 10.

he is, in all the weakness and disadvantage of his fallen nature, and that nothing in our own constitution or circumstances can be any hindrance to the mighty power of God.

What if we should begin to discount human promises as we do these Divine pledges? We see at once that we could do no greater wrong to the friends who love us. Every doubting of God's Word is a distinct step towards atheism—for if we take away from our thought of God our confidence in His love, or power, or truthfulness, what is there left to receive the name of God? Yet Christians who would be shocked beyond measure at the thought of committing such sins as either theft or falsehood, commit with scarcely a thought of wrong, this great sin of *making God a liar!* And then as He lets it happen to them according to their fears, they are foolish enough to accept this as a confirmation that they were right in their judgment. And because He still keeps over them His fatherly care, they are presumptuous enough to think that there is nothing so greatly amiss in their present position.

And thus there are those who will tell you that the Church of Christ was never more flourishing than now. They are ready to prove it by statistics of all sorts. Busy with their counting, they forget the ways of God, and see not the fingers that silently write amid their boasting, "Thou art *weighed in the balances*, and art found wanting." The Laodicean sign

of entire satisfaction with themselves is fulfilled. They appeal to the wealth and solid worldly standing of their organizations, and say complacently, "We are rich and increased with goods." Success is their idol, and spirituality is set at naught. Meantime they seem blinded as to the final effect of such a low state of Christian attainment upon the world, and forget *how powerless to win souls is a Church that is not Christ-like!*

But along with the classes thus indicated, there is a large and daily increasing number, who earnestly desire some better thing; who have never assumed for themselves any such position of unfaithfulness, but simply find themselves involved in the general shortcoming. They are bent upon wholly following the Lord their God, if only He will show them His way, and lead them out of their perplexities. For all such may the blessed lessons that follow in the Book of Joshua be as a message from the living God. May He send out His light and truth, and guide them, and bring them to this land of blessing.

And now let some of these suggestions be still further enforced by a simple sequel to the fable that closed the preceding chapter.

Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, is sitting at the hour of the evening sacrifice in his tent door. Leaning upon his staff, he is watching with dim eyes the smoke of the Altar as it rises against the westward

sky. Suddenly he is startled by a voice : " Art thou Nahshon the Prince of Judah ? "

And he answered, " I am he, but I can not behold thy face. Tell me whence thou comest, and wherefore. "

And the voice made answer, " I am Suli, from the land of Egypt. Dost thou not remember that eight and thirty years ago, I did eat bread in thy tent ? Suffer me again to salute thee. "

" Thou art welcome, O Suli, and it pleaseth me that thou hast turned thy feet hither once more while I am yet alive. "

" I thank thee for thy welcome, O Prince, but I can not say in truth that I also am pleased to find thee where thou art. Despise not my pity, but I remember thy expectation of that ' good land and large, ' as thou didst love to call it. Yet thou hast only shared the common doom of man. He is born to hope and disappointment. But thy sorrow, O Nahshon, is great beyond that of most ! "

" Nay, Suli, thou art mistaken. I do not need thy pity. Hast thou not heard how great a nation we are become ? When I was set over the house of Judah, they were but threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred, and behold how greatly my own tribe has multiplied. See, also, how large are the camps of Issachar and Zebulun, who do pitch with me. Whereas those that are numbered in the camp of Ephraim are nearly fourscore thousand less.

My own tribe has always taken the lead in our march. All this rejoiceth my heart."

"But I see not, O Nahshon, how this can comfort thee under the failure of which I spake."

"Failure, didst thou say? Suli, thou art mistaken I do assure thee we have had great success. Behold, now, our Tabernacle. When I made my first offering therein, I gave one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels. Likewise a silver bowl of seventy shekels. I filled them, moreover, with fine flour and oil, and gave with them a golden spoon full of incense: and one and twenty sacrifices, for burnt-offerings, and sin-offerings, and peace-offerings. Likewise did all the Princes. When I had first made mine own offering, no man of them all offered less."

"But thou art telling me of things that happened long since. I did hear of this offering of thine as I left thy tent before."

"Let me tell thee, then, of our present prosperity. Didst thou behold as thou camest the cattle of Reuben and of Gad upon the pastures of Bashan? It is a land they say that excelleth for cattle, and their flocks and their herds have greatly multiplied."

"Thou dost not, O Nahshon, understand my thought. I spake concerning men, and not of cattle."

"Hast thou not, then, regarded the order of our camp? Behold our men of war—how they are trained

to great skill ! Behold the discipline that is observed through all the host ! ”

“ I have observed all these things this day ; but still I can but judge that all this training is only to be accounted of as the means unto some end. I do not behold an end that is worthy of it. With all these men of war you have not been able to enter that land.”

“ But hast thou considered, O Suli, what a training this manner of life is for us ? Have we no need to be taught patient waiting and submission ? It is a part of our belief that our shortcomings work together in the end for good. We are kept humble by this proving. Who knoweth how our heart might have been lifted up in pride had we dwelt upon the other side of Jordan ? ”

“ How is it, O Nahshon, that in all this thou dost not speak of thy God ? Thou didst ever make mention of HIM, and not of *thyself*, when I did enter thy tent before. Is He still the God whom thou dost worship ? ”

“ The same, O Suli ! and He forgiveth us oft.”

“ Thou art wise, O Nahshon, and thy people with thee, to make the best of this failure, but it seemeth to me that thou art not wise when thou sayest that all is well with thee. Suffer me to ask one question further of thee. If, when Moses came to call you, he had only given you the promise of your God to bring you out of Egypt, and had said nothing at all

of Canaan, but, furthermore, had told you plainly that you would spend forty years in the Desert, would you have followed him? Thinkest thou he could have roused the nation without so great a promise?"

"Thou hast spoken rightly, and therein, as it seemeth to me, was the wisdom of such a promise. We needed to set out with high hopes. There was time enough to learn afterwards to give them up, and to take the other blessings of which I spake."

"How sayest thou, O Nahshon! Is thy God then a Deceiver, who must deal falsely with you to draw you on? Surely, thou didst tell me, eight and thirty years ago, that He had given you such a promise, and that He would without fail give you that Land."

"I marvel, O Suli, that thou dost not understand this. The Land *is* ours. The promise is the same. None of us for a moment doubt it. In all our holy songs we still sing about it. We speak of it sometimes to one another, that it is ours by right, for God hath given it to us. And, indeed, the only trouble is that while we know it to be our home, we have not yet reached it."

"Nay, Nahshon, if this be thy philosophy, it is falsely so called; for surely not to possess that which we have been promised, is worse than any poverty whatsoever. Thy words as thou speakest now, do contradict all whereof thou didst once assure me. One word thou spakest then—the saying of thy father

Abraham—hath ever been borne in mind by me as the sublimest speech mine ears have ever heard—‘What God hath promised He is able also to perform!’ Not until then had I ever heard of a God of real power, who had never failed to help His worshippers. A strange whisper sounded through my soul, ‘This is that unknown God for whom thou seekest!’ Yet have I wandered on, over many lands, having resolved to spend my days in seeking after that which is true, and to make out what I might of this great riddle of life, and to learn of those mysterious beings, whom we see not, but who no less clearly seem to exist. And now I had come back to thy people as the people of the True and Living God. But from that which thou hast told me, I perceive that thou wast mistaken. Even He is not true! All others, I am well persuaded, are false; and now I must die, despairing of ever knowing whether there be a God that has power upon earth or no. Thou mayest be satisfied for thyself, but thou hast made the heart of thy servant sad.”

“Stay, stay, my friend! Thou dost force me to confess that which I should have told thee at the first. Our God was faithful and true; but we ourselves became disobedient, and refused to enter the land because of our fears. Therefore are all we who are men to die in the wilderness; and our children are yet to possess it, if they be willing and obedient. Only a few remain among the living, and already, as

thou seest, O Suli ! is my strength decaying before my time. So soon as the last of us hath departed, they will cross over Jordan and possess that land. I rejoice for the sake of my children, for far be it from them to live the life which I have lived. I can only trust that we may render this service to our God ; that all who follow will be warned by our example, what a fearful thing and bitter it is not to believe in the word of our God. Surely all generations to come will point the finger at us as they say, ‘ Take heed lest ye also come short after this example of unbelief.’ I must die, but may thy life, O Suli ! be spared to see with thine own eyes what glorious things the Lord our God can do. And then, surely, thou wilt cast in thy lot with this people, and thou wilt say, ‘ This God shall be my God for ever and ever. He is true and faithful altogether.’ ”

CHAPTER III.

CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP.

“**M**OSES MY SERVANT IS DEAD. NOW, THEREFORE, ARISE, GO OVER THIS JORDAN, THOU AND ALL THIS PEOPLE.”—(*Joshua* i. 2).

In the lessons which are drawn in Holy Scripture from various events, there seems little care to bring even the moral antecedents into unity with the one point which supplies the instruction. In reality, Moses was excluded from the promised land because he spake unadvisedly with his lips. But in accord with Christ's own manner of teaching,* we are at perfect liberty to draw a lesson from his removal to give place to Joshua, as though this cause had not existed. Unquestionably his death at this critical period, and the raising up of a new leader whose very name anticipated Jesus,† were designed to teach

* See, for instance, the Parables of the Friend at Midnight, and the Unjust Judge.

† “Instead of Hosea, *i. e.*, help, which he was already called as the delegate of his tribe, Moses named him, with little change of the sound, but with an important addition to the sense, Jehoshua, *i. e.*, God help.”—*Ewald*.

“Such a union of mildness with strength, of simplicity with

us the separate spheres of Law and Grace—"The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ." *

As they could not possibly enter Canaan until Moses had died, so the Law is in one sense a hindrance. It can never introduce us into the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. It must not only die, but be buried, and all the days of its mourning must be ended. It might be objected to such an application of these facts, that had the people entered Canaan from Kadesh-Barnea, Moses would in that case have been their leader. But the same exception might be taken to many an inspired comment. The bare event itself, apart from cause or circumstances, is counted sufficient for "the analogy of faith."

And this special lesson, though not drawn for us by any inspired writer, is in the fullest harmony with their teaching. The whole Epistle to the Galatians is an earnest adjustment of the relations of Law and Grace—Works and Faith—Moses and Christ. One of the most important sections of the Epistle to the

prudence, of humility with magnanimity, has in it something evangelical. This peculiarity of his character, together with the peculiarity of the period in the kingdom of God in which he lived, and of the position which he took, makes him and his work a rich type of Him that was to come."—*F. R. Fay:—Lange's Com.*

* John i. 17.

Romans deals with the same subject, entering into some of its deepest difficulties. In both of these Epistles the truth that is taught has special reference, not to conversion, but to Christian life. It is, in fact, at some of the advancing stages of his course, that the disciple begins to find his need of such strong protests against the law. The usual tendency is to run well for a season, and then to be hindered. And while many other things may at first cause the failure of God's children to enter their glorious inheritance, there can be no doubt that subsequently, by far the greatest hindrance is their legality.

The moment that faith ceases to look unto Jesus, it loses all that heavenly vision that lies above the horizon; and as the eye is still lowered, and the glance shortened, there is only self for it to rest upon;—not always self in its indulgent forms, but self in its sufficiency; self even in its denials; self in all its solitary struggles. The history of many a Christian has for its chief data his so-called *holy resolutions*.

So blinded are the victims of this legality that they never dream of such a snare being set for them. They find themselves convicted of failure. Stirred up by the power of the Spirit, the will is aroused from its carelessness, and returns to its loyalty to God. And then it begins to act in its own strength. It says to itself, "It shall no longer be thus; I will from this moment lead a better and nobler life; I will put

forth all my efforts, and surely God will help me." And so this poor, humbled will regains its own self-respect. It begins to build up a reputation for itself. It does not see that this is self-reliance and not Faith.

Greatly to its astonishment it finds that it does not sustain this purpose. And now to its solemn resolutions it adds its vows. It will bind itself to God's will so that it can not break away. And lo! the vow is vanity. Now it adds intenser effort—"I must wrestle—I must struggle—it can not be that I am to go down before the puny power of these petty passions—that the things which I despise should yet master me." It is confounded when it finds that all these efforts only seem to call out the strength of its foe. Seeing that the battle is, indeed, desperate, it betakes itself more earnestly to prayer, but not to the prayer of simple trust. It is only a varied exercise of its own energy. It is only fulfilling one more of the many works which it is told it must perform. Its reliance is really more upon *prayer* than upon *God*. It is in utter consternation when it finds that even yet its help cometh not. What further can it do? It catches a watchword, "Believe only!" Ah! surely it has found the secret now! and leaving all else it will do this alone. Yes, it *will* believe, and it puts forth its last tremendous energy in what it calls an act of trust, but still self-originated, self-centred.

Thus every stepping-stone which God has furnished

by which Faith may draw nigh to Him, Legality turns into a stone of stumbling. Its provided helps become its hindrances, and only by repeated defeat does it learn that *the law is but a standard, and never strength*. It brings with it no power to fulfil itself, and so becomes weak, indeed, through the flesh.

To say that it finds *no* ability in man to keep it, would be to deny all moral responsibility. To some extent it finds man able to observe it in its letter. But as the Law becomes Spiritual, as its significance unfolds, as the Law given at Sinai is expounded on the Mount, as it claims the thoughts and intents of the heart, it finds the utmost strength of man unequal to it. However meeting some of its requirements, yet in others failing, he is with all his care a transgressor.

And the wretchedness of this failure is that he does not do this evil thing of choice. To *will* the good is present with him, but how to *perform* it he finds not. It is another law warring within him, and bringing him into captivity. He is like the strong man upon whom insidious disease is creeping. His task is before him, and he applies himself without a misgiving of failure. A strange languor drags him down. He is not doing it as he ought, and again he bestirs himself. And as he still fails, he goads himself on even with violence. But at last the law of disease asserts its full might, and he falls powerless. Sin is a disease. It works through all our nature like a poi-

son. The claims of the law were adjusted to health; and while under this disturbance there is the constant and inevitable failure to meet them all. The sick man must be healed before he can possibly fulfil the tasks of health.

Or, it is as when the frosts of winter still hold in their death-like grasp the trees of the forest and the seeds in the bosom of the earth. A law of growth has been given them. But this other law utterly opposes it. You place the perfect seed in the soil, and you ask it to fulfil the law of its being. It *can not*, until the soft showers have touched it, until the quickening rays of the sun have reached it. This law of growth is dependent upon powers that are to reach it from above. By itself it is a prisoner forever.

And so at last, man learns that the great law of his spiritual being is, that he shall live by Faith. He learns that his life is always derived, and always dependent. He learns that a power outside of himself, even the power of Christ, must be brought to bear steadily upon him, and so control him continually, if he ever fulfils his destiny. As he needed once a Justifier, so he always needs a Sanctifier.

When he sees at last that the help must be a Living Helper, when he ceases to ask, "What shall I do?" and cries instead, "Who shall deliver me?" he is very near his only possible answer—"Jesus Christ our Lord." He wages an unequal warfare till the law of sin and death is met by "the law of the spirit

of life in Christ Jesus." When this mighty Ally enters, the Usurper is mastered, and the soul is made free.

Henceforth weak as ever in itself, it learns what it is to be "strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man." Such words as, "Christ liveth in me," are now no vague and mystic speech, but the simplest expression of absolute truth. The death of Moses marked a new epoch. But it marks a more wondrous epoch in the history of our souls when we give up the law as our Leader, and are given over fully to the power of Jesus. In some respects it is a critical change,* for we need thoroughly to under-

* Olshausen's clear spiritual insight becomes especially powerful in his treatment of this subject—as, for instance, in these few detached passages: "The lofty aim of man, the *δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ*, is to be obtained *without law* through faith in Christ. By the *χωρὶς νόμου*, however, as is self-evident, it is not intended to express a renunciation of the law, for the law is holy and good, and necessary for all phases of life, but *to designate the altered position in which man stands to the law*. . . . The condition in which man is thoroughly *one* with the law, even as our Lord tells us God Himself is, constitutes exactly that *δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ*, to which faith brings us, because *through faith man receives the being of God into the depths of his soul*."

"That which is new in the Gospel does not consist in a more excellent system of morality, but in this, that the Gospel *opens a new source of strength*, by means of which true morality is attainable."

"The death of the faithful in the old man is connected with the death of the Redeemer, so that *His* death was *their* death, and did not merely prefigure it. . . . As little as the wife may

stand that thus we do "not make void the law," but ever "establish the law," till the *righteousness* of the law is fulfilled in us.

Life is its own law. Lifeless things are fashioned from without. The Masterpiece of Architecture must be led slowly up—shaped with line and plummet, and squared and measured continually; and meanwhile, a tiny seed shall, without line or measure, or the touch of a human hand upon it, or the outward application of any law, shape itself into the perfect grace and symmetry of a forest tree. How it mocks all art! Art may copy its arching, interlacing boughs, Art may shape its lordly pillars also; but how shall it

wantonly separate from her husband, since his death is requisite for her liberation: so little may the "I" free itself from the law as long as the old man is living. If this is done, therefore, as is always the case where a mere seeming faith prevails, it is a spiritual adultery, the lust after false freedom, that is, licentiousness, lawlessness. The liberation from the law rightly takes place only where the new man arose in the stead of the old, where, therefore, Christ is truly living in the man. There is no licentiousness, for Christ brings with Him the strictest law where-soever He works; but the *yoke* of the law is removed by that love which is shed into the hearts. This love urges to do more than the law requires, and to fulfil every act with purer intention than the most threatening law can demand. For love is insatiable. She never satisfies herself and the Beloved; she burns on till with her fire she glows through the whole heart and being, and has sacrificed her all to the Beloved. After this manner works the Gospel *all* in man without law, although it exacts *nothing* from him, but only promises, and gives to him."
—*Olshausen on the Romans* (Clark's Edition), pp. 143-231.

ever carve out those countless leaves, and keep them moving lightly in their airy dance! It is a thing of life. Its law was hidden in itself, and yet how true to law. The pattern once given by God to the parent stock is faithfully reproduced. Thousands of years ago God said, "Let the earth bring forth the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, and it was so." And it is still so. That which we watch with wonder is the continuous creation of God.

And such is the manner of that inward law by which fallen man comes to be "renewed after the image of Him that created him." Born again of incorruptible seed, it must develop in the likeness of that from which it is derived. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he can not sin, because he is born of God."* It is a strong statement, but it is held to truthfulness by all the analogy of nature. It is the glorious *law* of the Spirit of Life. Wherever Christ is allowed to come, He comes with creative power, both killing and making alive. He comes in to be Himself all in all. He comes into our being with His Edict, "Behold, I make all things new!"

As a striking preparation for the removal of Moses, we find him in renewed authority. Deuteronomy is composed almost entirely of his words. There all God's dealings with His Chosen pass in solemn re-

* 1 John iii, 9.

view. Then the Law is recapitulated, but with a significant change that may well be stamped in the title of the Book as *a Second Law*. It is given now not so much in threatening as in blessing. Richer promises cluster around it. It constantly anticipates the life of Israel in the Land of Promise. It is the Law less in its letter and more in its spirit; as, for instance, in the sixth chapter, where all the commandments are headed up in one that so wonderfully anticipates the Gospel: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."* The purpose of the Law stands out more clearly—"for thy good *always*." And at length the Law clothes itself with the soft tints of the morning, and almost shines with the same glory that shines in the face of Jesus Christ, as God is spoken of as having a delight in them to love them, and as rejoicing over them for good.

And in this is prefigured the pathway by which the soul passes out into the fulness of Grace. A Deuteronomy is as needful a preparation as Sinai. The Disciple of the Law has not outgrown his tutelage till, from the mere use of rules, he passes to the deep principles that underlie them. The Law thus even revives in preparation for its passing, and with less of terror, and more of love, makes its claims to be more imperatively felt than ever.

And now it is almost ready to depart; and yet one

* Deut. vi. 5.

thing remains to be done. There has come through all this discipline, this leading on and on, the most intense desire to reach the goal. Shall it have no glimpse of all the grace it has been ministering unto? Even so Moses entreated the Lord—"I pray thee let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon."

And so he stood upon the top of Pisgah, while the Lord, who stood beside him ready to give him burial, showed him all the land. The eye that was not dim received, doubtless, some new power as God bade him look—"This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed; I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither."*

Not *then*, and not until his Lord summoned him from that valley sepulchre which none else knew, to climb another mountain, and appear there with a fellow-servant who had not tasted even death as he was taken up—both of them sharing now in their Lord's transfiguration; talking not of that mystic burial, not of that mysterious chariot of fire, but of *that decease* yet to be accomplished at Jerusalem. When Christ is glorified, Law and Prophecy appear with Him in glory; yet in such wise that their light is speedily absorbed in His, and the eyes that look see "JESUS ONLY," and the ears that hearken are bidden to "HEAR HIM."

* Deut. xxxiv. 4.

In the first command that reaches Joshua after the death of Moses, we find an expression full of meaning—"Thou and all this people." Throughout the Book we never find the Lord speaking directly to the nation; but as the "Lord spake unto Joshua," so "he spake unto the people." It had been thus since they said unto Moses, "Speak thou with us and we will hear; but let not God speak with us lest we die."* But not only is Joshua the mediator between the Lord and Israel, in the same manner that Moses was, but we find now a new identification between the Leader and People: He is included with them and they with him. "Go thou over this Jordan;"—"Be thou strong and very courageous;"—"I have given into thine hand Jericho." In all these charges the people also are signified, but as represented in him. And so the Record is fitly called, not the Acts of the Israelites, but the Book of Joshua. *One person is pre-eminent.*

The spiritual truth with which this is in harmony is of exceeding importance. Our Gospel is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not of any truth or blessing apart from Him. Standing as the Mediator between God and Man, not only has He entered into heaven for us, but also in every step of His pathway He took us with Him, saying evermore to His Father, "Behold I and the children whom thou hast given Me!"†

And He did this not ideally, but in a sense as true

* Ex. xx. 19.

† Heb. ii. 13.

as it is deep. That which was true of the parent tree, is true of its branches. We do not assign one age to its trunk and another to its twigs. We speak of it as a unit. This same continuity of life belongs to mankind. Thus St. Paul speaks of Levi paying tithes in Abraham. So, also, he says, "I HAVE BEEN *crucified with Christ.*" So he reasons that if "One died for all, *therefore all died.*" So he teaches us to reckon our rising into newness of life from *His* resurrection—"Ye were also *raised again WITH Him.*"*

To Jesus was given the glorious work of conquering a possession for all His people. As the Prince of Faith, He passed through death to life, and took and held for us the heavenly heights of all spiritual blessing. Putting Himself as one of us, and speaking as the Head of the whole Body, He declared, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."†

So, then, the work of sanctification is primarily to be regarded as that which Jesus has already done, not as that which we have yet to do. The completion

* "If Christ took our nature upon Him by an act of love, it was not that of one, but of all. He was not one man only among men, but in Him all humanity was gathered up. And thus now, as at all time, mankind are, so to speak, organically united with Him. His acts are in a true sense our acts, so far as we realize the union; His death is our death, His resurrection our resurrection."—*Westcott's Gospel of the Resurrection.*

† John xvii. 19.

of it is simply this, that we apprehend that for which we *were* apprehended by Jesus Christ.

Thus, in Christ, Christian experience is no longer problematical. It is only the corollary of faith following from the truth which He has demonstrated.

The intellectual apprehension of this truth, however easy to some, appears to be extremely difficult to others. Yet its spiritual apprehension makes it simple to all. Let it once be clearly recognized by faith, and we stand forthwith upon new ground. No longer on the shifting sands of our narrow selfhood, we tread the Rock of Ages in all its breadth and strength.

It happens with this truth more often, perhaps, than with others, that we think ourselves perfectly familiar with it, while knowing very little of it. In its real revelation to our souls there can be no mistaking it. It is no longer a theory at which we look, but a Power that, like the living Creature in the wheels, lifts us up and bears us ever onward.

“Thou, and all this people.” — “Christ first, afterwards they that are Christ’s.” And so our career is already certified, being only this, to follow Him whithersoever He goeth. God’s promise links together the Leader and his followers when He declares, “Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you.”* The feet of Jesus have outstripped our feet; but every place

* Josh. i. 3.

whereon His blessed feet have rested, is already conquered, and is ours as well as His. Life, death, things present, things to come, all are ours, for we are Christ's. Far above us, up the heights we slowly climb, we see His standard set already. "We see not yet all things put under *us*, but we see JESUS crowned with glory and honor." Since He is seated there, our place is there—at Sion, not at Sinai.

We set at naught all this work of Christ, when we go back to Moses, and with him exceedingly fear and quake before the terrible sight, and the trumpet of the Law. How has our Captain charged us,—“See that ye refuse not Him that now speaketh from Heaven.” See that ye believe His truth and grace. See that ye trust Him, and let the exceeding fear give place to the exceeding joy of ever looking unto Jesus, the Prince and Perfecter of Faith.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BOUNDARY LINE.

“THE GOOD LAND THAT IS BEYOND JORDAN.”
—(*Deut.* iii. 25).

The crossing of Jordan was to be the great initiative of the Conquest. All the events of their future were focalized at this point, and, therefore, thither their eyes were always directed. “When ye be come over Jordan,” was the fitting introduction of many a precept. The wisdom of God is very apparent in leading His people out of Egypt by the way of the Red Sea, appointing that as the memorable boundary of the land of bondage, and there “baptizing them unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” It is the counterpart of this act to give them now a like baptism in Jordan—committing them, by another marked display of His power, to the leadership of Joshua, and bringing them in with an arm outstretched as wide as when He brought them out. The two crossings stand thus coupled in the second Psalm of the Hallel, as similar displays of the presence and power of God—“What ailed thee, O thou Sea, that thou fleddest, thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back!” *

* Ps. cxiv. 5.

Elsewhere, we find an omission of the crossing of Jordan as significant as this special mention of it. In that sublime chapter in Hebrews, where the heroes of the kingdom pass along their triumphal way of Faith, there is a sudden hiatus of forty years, leaving two remote events in conjunction: "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days."* Up to this point each important step had been noted; but the Apostle would not turn aside to trace the by-ways of unbelief; no, not even to glance at that step of faith which ended them. The record with this silence restores the true order of experience. Had there been no wandering, there would have been no Jordan to cross.

In harmony with this we find that the Epistles which describe so fully the doctrines of Christ, never teach that any second marked experience is needful to follow conversion save this—after they had believed, to be "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise," which was the earnest of their inheritance.† The route which they marked out for every traveller ran direct to Kadesh-Barnea. Besides this, such was the faith of the early disciples, that they could be usually addressed as those who were already in heavenly places, although very far, in some instances, from

* Heb. xi. 29, 30.

† Eph. i. 13, 14.

having conquered all their enemies, and from possessing all the land. The counsel adapted to them is precisely that which we need, as we come to take the same stand of faith. But *until then* we need another lesson. Thus, in the case of giving counsel to a foreigner already landed on our shore, we would say nothing about the sea. Whereas, were he on the other side, we would speak first of the most pressing point—*how to cross*. Such *crossing over* is unquestionably the great need of the majority of Christians; not to make some slight change in their course, but to get upon new ground.

And yet there may for many be other needs, lying back of this. Some may have accomplished their Exodus who have not learned Leviticus;—who have not come to worship God in spirit and in truth. Others, again, have never passed through Numbers—have never declared their pedigree and claimed their adoption. Others who have come thus far have stopped short of Deuteronomy. Having drawn back in unbelief and lost their vantage ground, they have never been roused to have the law revived in their hearts, and pressing its claims upon them with all the more force, for all that they have learned of the goodness of God. Some, indeed, there seem to be, who have even forgotten that there is a Land of Promise before them. They have neither climbed a Pisgah for themselves, nor believed the report that has been brought by others.

Doubtless much of the failure of those who think for a time that they have found the desired blessing, only to learn their mistake, is the result of neglecting this preliminary teaching. Their need is deeper than is apprehended by themselves or others. It is in vain to think of crossing over Jordan, until God has prepared us to conquer and to hold the land; and how can this be done, unless we know assuredly that He is ours and that we are His? Happily, these antecedent steps, while all important to be taken, may be rapidly taken; and still more happily, a large number of Christians are prepared to take them as soon as they are clearly pointed out. These are steps of comparative ease; but the step which now more specially claims our attention, is one that no human foot can take by itself. God Himself must make the pathway here; and when it is made, His wonderful work will be coupled forever, in our thoughts and in our songs, with His first great work for us: "The Sea saw it and fled! Jordan was driven back!"

What then does Jordan signify? and what more does it teach us than was signified in the Red Sea crossing? St. Paul has taught us that the fathers were "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."* It was a shadow of that substance concerning which he writes—"Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him." The Lamb

* 1 Cor. x. 2.

with its sprinkled blood had set forth one all-important aspect of salvation—that of Atonement ; while the Red Sea crossing was needed to set forth another no less important—Regeneration. With this—their baptism—the old life ended and the new life began. That crossing corresponded to conversion or the New Birth, of which Baptism now in its form and spirit is both the symbol and the seal.

The Red Sea and Jordan alike signify Baptism, in its double meaning of Death and Resurrection. Yet they differ in this, that the Red Sea gives prominence to the Death, and Jordan to the Resurrection. The one marked the end of bondage—the other the entrance upon true freedom. Strictly speaking, the two events have but one Antitype—the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. Objectively they are one. But subjectively, in our own death and resurrection with Christ, the two events give each experience its fitting emphasis. As one crossing took Israel out of Egypt, and the other into Canaan—so with us, one separates us from the world, the other leads into Heavenly places. Again, this further distinction appears: at the Red Sea they were baptized unto Moses ; that is, unto fellowship with him in that faith by which he had forsaken Egypt, and unto following him. At Jordan they were committed to Joshua—precisely as we follow the *Law-giver*, while it is the death of Christ that is mainly recognized, and then when we see more clearly the Risen Lord, we follow the *Life-*

giver. The great lesson of Jordan is the power of Christ's Resurrection* to separate us not only from Egypt, but from all wilderness wanderings, and to secure for us an entrance into Heavenly places.†

The significance of Jordan may appear more clear from a glance at its hallowed associations. The Scriptures often use mere locality as the link of spiritual truths. A singular instance appears in the words, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son," as applied to the sojourn of the infant Jesus in that land—the

* "Arise, sad heart, if thou dost not withstand,
 Christ's resurrection, thine may be :
 Do not by hanging down break from the hand,
 Which, as it riseth, raiseth thee :
 Arise, arise ;
 And with His burial-linen dry thine eyes."

—GEORGE HERBERT.

† "It is obvious to every thoughtful Christian, that a strong link of connection exists between the crossing of the Red Sea and of Jordan. It is found in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus ; but there are two effects sensibly different and of real importance, that we should distinguish.

"Regarded in the type of the Red Sea, it is simply setting us apart to God from the world, making us pilgrims while we are passing through it ; crossing the Jordan, or the death and resurrection of Christ, in this point of view does far more. It is the power of that mighty work as bringing us into the possession of our heavenly blessings before we go there. We are made consciously of Heaven ; we have still to fight before the time is come to rest. In both cases it is not that merely is Christ dead and risen, but this applied to us by the Spirit."—*Lectures Introductory to the Historical Books, by W. Kelly, p. 4.*

utter unlikeness of the *outward* events forcing us to seek for some more subtle accord.

Around the name of Jordan we find a group of events which are in close alliance as to their inward character. Jacob passed twice over Jordan—once as the lonely pilgrim with his staff, and again returning with his two bands. It was over Jordan that David fled in the darkness of the night from Absalom; and to its banks he returned to be brought over it again—in state, as king of the very hearts of his people. When Elijah was to be taken from Elisha, the two stood by Jordan till Elijah with his mantle smote the waters, and they went over on dry ground; and again, Elisha returned thither with a double portion of his master's spirit upon him, and himself smote the waters, and passed safely through, as his first miracle. In these instances, the first crossing is in poverty—in defeat—in sorrow; and the second, is in wealth—in restoration—in triumph.

Again, this very crossing of Jordan by the Israelites has another event as its companion. When Jacob was carried back into Canaan to be buried, they went, it is expressly noted, beyond Jordan to the threshing-floor of Atad, lying between the river and Jericho.* “There they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation.” The head of their nation was gone. In the cave of Machpelah reposed the bones of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and that sepulchre was their

* Gen. l. 10.

sole possession in the land promised to each. The nation turned back bereft to Egypt, not to come over Jordan again, till multiplied beyond measure, they went into Canaan as their home. National death and national resurrection are signified in these two crossings.

Again, during the baptism of John, Jordan was the significant stream selected. There they "confessed their sins." They virtually declared themselves dead in those sins by submitting to a rite known hitherto only to aliens, in their acceptance of Judaism. Jesus could not possibly join in this *confession of sin*, even while by a like baptism he identified himself with the sinner. Instead of this, there was a *confession of His righteousness* from the opened heavens—"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* Both of these meanings are accordingly preserved in Christian baptism—death of self unto sin, and resurrection in Christ unto righteousness.

Yet again, in these two crossings of the Red Sea and Jordan, we may find the coupling of the offices of Christ and His Spirit. The first gives no faint foreshadowing of the power of His death and His most precious blood. The second has significance in its very name, "*The Descender*," or "flowing down." The power of the Risen Lord was manifested chiefly in the descent of the Holy Spirit. It was the outpouring of this gift that made the marvellous change

* Matt. iii. 17.

in the Disciples of Jesus, and it is still a distinct experience from that of believing in the Lord Jesus for the forgiveness of sins; as is clearly taught, for example, in the question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"* and again, in this statement, "As yet He was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."† The close connection of the two appears in the charge, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."‡

Jordan signifies to us this baptism of the Holy Spirit, or the power of Christ's resurrection; since upon this and His subsequent glorification, the giving of the Spirit depended. This *Baptism* of the Spirit means far more than being *born* of the Spirit. The birth of Jesus identified Him with our human nature; His baptism in Jordan identified him still further with our human lot of sin and suffering. So does our *birth* of the Spirit make us partakers of His divine nature, while the *Baptism* of the Spirit makes us sharers of His righteousness, His joy, His power. It is not merely life that is bestowed, but *life more abundantly*.

To attain fully to all that this resurrection implies, is the life-work of each child of God—the "working out" of his salvation. As the Resurrection of Jesus ended in His glorification, so ours goes on to the

* Acts xix. 2.

† Acts viii. 16.

‡ Acts. ii. 38.

same goal. It can not be completed till we reach "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;" until we reach this with our entire being, even this body of ours becoming like unto His glorious body.* Therefore, the full appropriation of what Christ has wrought for us must be a continuous work, and the Baptism of the Spirit must be a life-long baptism, coming not only once, like the early rain, but in many a soft shower, and in silent successive dews of night.

* "This tendency to ignore the importance of the body, proceeds from a general lack of insight into the Scriptural philosophy of nature and of spirit. Those who do so are *entirely wanting in any profound apprehension of the process of salvation*, by which, according to Scripture, God is carrying on the world toward its consummation. This process must extend to the corporeal world as well as to the spiritual. For the victory of divine love over all the powers of sin and death would *not be complete*, if the body of man were not once to be released from the bonds of death, and raised into that glorious condition for which God has originally destined it. Like all other terrestrial bodies, it is intended one day to be entirely penetrated by the spirit—to be translated into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and thus to be transformed in light inwardly and outwardly (Rom. viii. 21-23; Phil. iii. 21; 2 Cor. iv. 10, etc.) And how otherwise could this world-renewing process be begun, than by the resurrection and transformation of that one Body over which death had no power—the sinless body of Christ, the second Adam, in whom all are to be made alive? (1 Cor. xv. 22, et seq.) In His resurrection "the consummation of the world is anticipated." As in the nether world Christ broke the bonds of spiritual death, so in His resurrection He destroyed the organic power of death in the earthly creation, and impregnated it (as an organism; hence the dead

Thus we have the paradox of a work that is finished, and yet only begun—of Christ having “perfected us for ever,” and yet we ourselves “going on unto perfection.”

St. Paul has given us, in most admirable terms, this distinction between God’s side and man’s side. In his Epistle to the Philippians, he glances first at this power of Christ’s resurrection and the hope it holds out to him. In all humility he declares that he has not attained, that he is not already perfected ;

bodies of the saints appear in Matt. xxvii. 52 and 53) with new and divine vital forces ; just as in the heart the life-blood is prepared afresh, and from it flows forth into all the limbs. The resurrection-power coming from Christ, through the medium of His Word and sacraments, tends mainly to the sanctification and renewing of the sinner (Rom. v. 10 ; Eph. ii. 5, 6 ; 1 Pet. i. 3), and thus interpenetrates, first, the spiritual nature of man, planting within those who are regenerate a germ for the resurrection of the body (Rom. viii. 11). Then the spiritual life of Christ breaks forth in a manifestation in the visible world, by revivifying the bodies of those who are sanctified (in the first resurrection. 1 Cor. xv. 23 ; John v. 25–29 ; Rev. xx. 5, 6). In the succeeding general resurrection—an act of Christ’s power which extends to the *whole* of the corporeal world, and introduces the great mundane catastrophe (Rev. xx. 11–13)—as well as in the formation of a new heaven and a new earth, this grand and gradually progressive progress of the world’s renewal has its fitting consummation. It is God’s will that His glory should dwell in His whole creation, that He may be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 28 ; Rev. xxi. 3, et se.) In this respect we must indorse the sentiment of Oetinger, that “corporeity is the end of God’s ways.”—*Modern Doubt and Christian Belief*, by Theodore Christlieb, D.D., pp. 451, 452.

but he presses on to "*apprehend*" that for which he was "*apprehended*" of Christ. It was because of the fixity of the mighty work of Christ, and the support it gave to faith, that all his energies were roused to obtain the full benefit of it. Because he is apprehended, he will henceforth apprehend.

Yet is the *first* apprehension, the first entrance upon this risen life, the all-important point, and that which Jordan represents. You plant, for example, a little vine. You know its possibilities and provide for them. You place close to its root the trellis upon which it is to climb, without which it could only creep upon the ground. In the placing of that trellis within its reach, with full provision for all future growth, the vine may be said to be apprehended. But the chief difficulty is found in the first attachment to its support. When the vine has fairly clasped it and begun to wind its tendrils about it, it has begun to apprehend. Its career is before it, but the crisis is that beginning.

It was an immense advantage in leaving Egypt, to know it by the sharpest of all boundary lines. Had the boundary been a valley, a hill, a rock, the fact would have been known; but how slight would have been the impression thus made upon the mind! But, being what it was, passing first through the walled waters, and watching then the waves that overwhelmed their enemies, an entire revolution in all their thoughts and purposes would naturally follow,

That Sea was both a boundary and a barrier. They stood upon new ground with another life before them. And no less was the advantage of a distinct boundary and barrier between the wilderness and Canaan. There a host more formidable than all Pharaoh's horses and chariots were swallowed up—even their fears and unbelief—and as once their hearts thrilled with the cry, "Out of Egypt!" so would they thrill again at the blessed certainty, "over this Jordan!"

In how many human events is our interest concentrated upon some one act that clearly and openly signifies many beside itself. How much meaning in that one moment when the crown is set upon the brow of a Monarch! Does He not seem from that time more truly to reign? How much it means when the hand is set in solemn signature, in the presence of witnesses, to that Title-deed which gives a Homestead or forfeits it! How much it means beyond all that has already been—the marriage-day—the spoken vow—the ring upon the hand! Those now wedded hearts were pledged long ago. They give themselves to each other at this moment not more fully than then. But God and man alike ordain that such an event should be signalized, that there should be somewhat to mark it for the eye and ear of others. What emotions stir the soul even of a spectator in such a scene! By all these tokens it becomes a reality that is recognized.

And so in countless things the new future demands

its turning point. Did not Cæsar feel it when he crossed his Rubicon? Was not every man in that army stronger for that act? Jordan is the Christian's Rubicon; and is it not well when the Lord calls to us with a voice of command so distinct as this, "Arise, and go over this Jordan!" And were these glorious privileges in Christ Jesus pointed out long and lovingly—were they spoken of line upon line, till dull hearts caught the meaning, what an arising would there be through all the slumbering hosts of Christendom!

We have on record the lives of not a few noble men and women who, years after their conversion, heard this new call to arise and go further on. They passed through a distinct spiritual crisis, and stood henceforth on new ground. They were full of the Holy Spirit. Here and there through that region of Christian biography resounding with secret moans of "Wo is me!" we find those who have walked almost like Enoch, in wondrous fellowship with God. And yet in their own statements of truth there is often a vagueness. The silver trumpet does not give a certain sound. They had not really come unto all riches of "the full assurance of *understanding*;" and so, while in their own experience they had far outstripped their comrades, they knew not how to give the clew to others to follow them, as they had followed Christ. Their teaching lacked that great essential of *definiteness*.

There are always to be found, however, those whom indefiniteness suits. The vague teaching shelters their want of full devotion to God. They carefully avoid a crisis. They are not whole-hearted enough to be decided. They do not want to face the question, Do I from this day follow the Lord fully? Am I ready to be made conformable unto His death, that I may know the power of His resurrection? Am I willing that God's Holy Spirit should baptize my whole being—spirit, soul, and body, so sanctifying me, and keeping me blameless unto the coming of the Lord? Such questions search the heart down to its hidden thoughts and intents. It requires the truest faith to die with Jesus, and to live only in Him. But such thoughts can only irritate those whose policy it is to evade conviction of their true state. And even where it only results in hesitation, yet what terrible quicksands of unbelief even this discloses. No, they do not care to give over the whole being to God! They desire to keep to themselves the control and choice of many little things, for God might not always care for their pleasure, nor secure the interests they most prize!

Poor soul! that art weighed in such a balance and found wanting, look yet again that thou mayest *see*. The first step out of every difficulty is *the removal of our misapprehensions of God*. Listen to the voice that pleads with thee, and even through the Law declares of every dealing with thee—"for thy

good always." He loveth thee! He delighteth in thee! Look and listen till thou canst trust Him fully, and lay thy all before Him!

But how many are there of quite another class—souls earnest and eager to be taught of God—who have been hindered by the erroneous teaching of the very truth they need! Important as it is to put a clear boundary line between our failure and our faith and to cross over this Jordan, yet it is a most serious mistake to overload this experience with a stress it can not bear. Very plainly, in the case of the Israelites, to cross the Jordan was not to conquer all their enemies in the act. It was to prepare them for victory; it was to pledge it to them; and yet it could only be the earnest of their inheritance. Nor was it in the fullest sense possession, since, as has been said, it was only the soles of their feet that could secure that. The land was theirs by promise before. It was theirs now by the first putting in of an actual claim. Hereafter it should be more fully theirs as they advanced and conquered and held it.

This subject will claim a fuller handling when we reach the long warfare that followed their entrance; but here let it be simply premised that the system which teaches that *entire* sanctification is an instantaneous work, has the feeblest possible support from Scripture, either as to the doctrine or the phraseology. Experimentally, the results of such teaching, however flattering for a time, are finally most disas-

trous. The poor soul, once beguiled into self-deception and the assertion of claims which can not be soberly sustained, is either pushed on the one hand up the heights of presumption, or else is driven back on the other to drop into the depths of despair. No close observer can doubt that such has been the general tendency of this teaching, while happy exceptions may be seen, where there has been such a private adjustment of its terms as virtually to change the doctrine. Beside this, the love of God really shed abroad in the heart, has a wonderful power to render error innocuous. But taking the system in its legitimate results, there can be little doubt that eventual loss is sustained by its supporters. The testimony which it encourages has a singular tendency to recur to past experiences, or if touching upon the present state, to claim little more than the conservation of former blessings. Meanwhile, the importance attached to such testimony repels those who, like an apostle, desire to know not the *speech* of them that are puffed up, but the *power*!

It seems the more needful in all Christian charity to allude to these errors, from the fact that, with few exceptions, this has been the prevalent mode in which the doctrine of Holiness or Sanctification has been presented *as a specialty*. At the same time such a monopoly of the subject has been claimed, as to insist that it was the *only* correct mode—so challenging the assent of those who could heartily sym-

pathize with its object. The unhappy result in the case of many who recoil from these assumptions in doctrine, linked with such inconsistencies in life, is that they do so, as though released from all further inquiry upon the subject. They begin to waste their strength upon controversy, and are more eager to point out the logical inaccuracy of the system, than to find a true remedy for their own shortcomings. It is a dark day for those who begin finally to justify themselves for the beam in their own eye, because they have found a mote in the eye of a brother. When the great beam of an unconsecrated life is taken from their own eyes, it may be that God will give them the grace, not to *point* out, but to *pluck* out, the mote of misapprehension from their brother's eye.

As for the many thousands who desire to follow the Lord fully, whether among the satisfied sustainers of such a system, or those who are perplexed and hindered by it, or those who, ignorant of this, yet know right well the need of their lives—as for the multitude thus seeking after God, may He make His own Word a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their path.

Any failure which exists in the lives of such, passing by all secondary causes, has its real origin in unbelief. Like Israel of old, losing sight of God to see only self and the giant enemies, the one pressing need is to have the eye refixed on Christ in a true apprehension of Him as our Risen Lord—a work

which only the Spirit of God can accomplish for us. A right relation to Christ must precede our growing up into Him in all things. Happy that moment when the eye sees Him !

And how often is it the work of a moment at last. The sunrise may have been long heralded by steady increase of light, and yet it is in a flash that you see the golden orb itself. And when once the eye long occupied with self, whether in seeking its pleasure or proving its weakness, is lifted at last to see Jesus as the Prince and Perfecter of Faith—when it sees that it is Christ that it wants, and that this Christ is waiting for us, having all power in heaven and earth, it has had its vision—it has had its call, “Arise, and go over Jordan !” Seeing Christ arise, and give thyself fully to Him, to receive His fulness, and henceforth go on to apprehend that for which thou art now apprehended.

CHAPTER V.

THE TRIPLE PREPARATION.

I.—COURAGE.

“**B**E STRONG AND OF A GOOD COURAGE; BE NOT AFRAID, NEITHER BE THOU DISMAYED: FOR THE LORD THY GOD IS WITH THEE WHITHERSOEVER THOU GOEST.”—(*Josh.* i. 9).

The first element of success in this vast undertaking of obtaining the Land of Promise was Courage. Hitherto the people had not set their heart aright, and fearing had failed. A new attitude of heart must, therefore, be assumed. The Hebrew words which are so often repeated fix very clearly the special character of this courage, “Be *strong* and *firm*.”* This meaning is brought out very distinctly in our own version of the words of Isaiah, “Strengthen ye the weak *hands*,

* Joshua i. 6, חֲזַק וְאַמֵּץ, “Verbum חֲזַק proprie notat *vires* quæ sunt *in manibus* adprehendendum retinendum que viriliter; sicut contra אִמְּץ *firmitudinem*, quæ *in genibus* est, ad consistendum, ne ab alio quis evertatur.”—*Michaelis*.

“Joshua must lay hold boldly and with a strong hand, and then when he has done so, allow nothing to drive him from his position.”—*Lange's Com.*

and confirm the feeble *knees*." * To be *strong* signifies that the hands were fitted to take sure hold of the land; to be *firm*, that the feet should be so planted that they could not be dislodged. Again, this meaning appears very literally in the charge addressed to the saints in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet." †

But how is it that such courage is commanded? And being commanded, who can possibly create it in his heart? The command was based upon an assurance—"I will be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be strong and firm." ‡ This strength was to come, therefore, from believing in the presence and power of God. The courage was to be *the courage of Faith*. The fear which had been so disastrous to them was the result of looking away from God, and forgetting Him; and so the courage could only result from again looking unto Him, and ever remembering Him. The revelation of a personal, present, and all-powerful God, is given as the basis of their faith and its consequent courage.

Further, it was to be sustained by meditation upon the Word of God; as we find in close connection the charge, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night." Deep and quiet thought which revolves day by day the thoughts of God, feeds the strength

* Is. xxxv. 3.

† Heb. xii. 12, 13.

‡ Josh. i. 5, 6.

of faith. We are assured in the first Psalm, that to "delight in the law of the Lord," and to "meditate in it day and night," is the secret of constant growth and fruitfulness. For faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. And so it is the "*word of faith*" which is presented. Apart from some such revelation of God there could be no faith. Along with that word proceeding out of the mouth of God, there ever flows a vital effluence of the Spirit, by which the soul that receives it is enlightened and strengthened. And so believing, it also obeys. It "observes to do" according to this revelation of the mind of God. And so brought into harmony with Him, it prospers and has good success.

And thus there comes at last a holy confidence in God, that seeing Him always, *cannot* be afraid—as when in this brief charge to Joshua, we find for the third time the words, "Be strong, be firm;" it is added, "For the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." No minute direction, no specific precept whatever, could at all compare in importance with this fundamental charge. Nothing must distract the servant of God in the clear reception of this one grand truth: God is with thee; therefore be strong, be firm. *Take* hold of His promises, and *keep* that hold.

It was thus that the Lord Jesus provided for the faith and courage of His disciples in the great work He gave them in the world: "Lo I am with you all

the days, even unto the end of the world." "Fear not," is the gracious charge He is ever giving as He more and more reveals Himself.*

And what need is there still of this charge! The experience of ages has not taken away our weakness; and the fears and the waverings of many a Christian—the weak hands and feeble knees—are even now pitiable to consider. Until this element is eliminated, Christian heroism is an impossibility, as is, indeed, anything noble in character or service. Nothing so demoralizes the forces of the soul as fear. But if we answer the question of our Lord, "*Why* are ye so

* Stier upon Acts xviii. 9, thus sums up the occasions of its use: "Fear not but speak, and keep not silence! Still coming first the same word of encouraging grace—so needful to us poor children of men—which runs through the whole of Scripture from beginning to end, *Fear not!* Simon Peter heard it from the lips of the Lord Jesus when his call to be a fisher of men was repeated, Luke v. 10; Abraham received it first in the Old Testament, Gen. xv. 1,—after a victory, too, like St. Paul here; for father Adam first of all confessed in behalf of us all—I was afraid! The Lord and His angels often say it in the Old Testament. The New begins with it to Zacharias, Mary, Joseph, the Shepherds. The Lord often utters it during His earthly life, down to John xiv. 1: the angels at the sepulchre of the risen Jesus give it new strength. The ascended and glorified Redeemer inspires vigor into the soul of St. John at Patmos by the same word, *Fear not!* Rev. i. 17. How needful is this word to His Disciples everywhere and in all ages; and how ready He ever is to utter it to them!

"It is the abiding word of the Divine majesty and mercy for human poverty, weakness, and guilt."—*The Words of the Risen Saviour*, by Rudolf Stier, p. 72.

fearful?" we can give no reason save the absence of that faith that is ever looking unto Jesus. Nothing fosters fear like solitude; and nothing is more quick to catch contagion from evil converse. Only as we recognize the presence of the Lord, does fear give place to faith—a faith that is communicated by Him. The child that in the hour of danger has been always by his father's side, and has never seen him flinch, receives his courage from him. As we dwell consciously in the presence of God, as our thought is ever of His Love and Power, our souls, despite all their natural fears, will uprise in their strength. We can say calmly in the midst of darkness and tumult, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?"

Such simple, childlike faith in God has made more heroic souls upon this earth than the stoic could ever dream. Not through the long training of the iron nerve, but by the trusting glance at the risen Lord, have the tender woman and the timid child been strong and firm, in the midst of peril and of terrible torture. They "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Would that all could be persuaded that it is not a question of nature, but of grace; not of *temperament*, but of *trust*. What an instance of this is found in the lives of these three men—Peter, Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea. Studying the natural characteristics of Peter, any of us would have trusted his

courage before its failure ; and by all their antecedents we would look for anything but heroic discipleship from the other two. We see Peter ever ready to do and dare ; Nicodemus stealing stealthily by night to Jesus ; Joseph full of fear of the Jews. So stand the three by nature. But look at them again, when Grace has outstripped nature. Peter, lying and cursing for fear of a maid-servant ; Joseph, going boldly to Pilate to beg the body of Jesus ; and Nicodemus, in the full daylight, staggering beneath his hundred pounds of spices, to the tomb of the Teacher, sent from God—these two out of weakness made strong, even as the other shall be, when he has learned his own weakness.

Timid soldier of Christ, called to pass over this Jordan and possess the good land and large—listen to the first charge of all, “Be strong ! be firm !” And to win this holy courage, look unto Jesus. Never look downward to thy fear—never around to thy foes—look solely unto Jesus !

And looking thus, meditate also upon His law, remembering that this holy law is now a gospel, and that we are to observe to do according to all that is written therein—not only according to all its precepts, but also according to all its promises, all its privileges.

If ever your hands grow weak, and your knees feeble, it is because you see too little ; because, like Elisha’s servant, you see only the hosts and chariots of the enemy close around. Therefore you ask, “Alas !

how shall we do?" The Lord open your eyes, that you may look further, and see the mountains beyond, full of the hosts of God encamping round about you !

It was to Joshua, that this charge to be firm and strong was given primarily. His own exhibition of these qualities was to inspire the people. The Lord Jesus was the living embodiment of this holy courage. We see Him strong to endure the cross, firm to despise the shame. We see Him taking the straight path toward that joy which was set before Him, and we know that He will not fail nor be discouraged till He has set judgment in the earth. As we watch Him thus—Prince and Perfecter of Faith—how our weak hands grow strong and our feeble knees firm.

This thrice repeated charge to Joshua had been already given thrice before. We find it in the last words of Moses, addressed first to the people at large, and then twice in the sight of all Israel to Joshua, so that six times in all, the chosen Leader heard the words of God—" *Be strong, be firm.*" We also need their repetition. Not all at once are such qualities established in the soul. How often the Lord finds us, like Daniel, with *no* strength in us. He lifts us first, from that utter prostration to our knees. Again, at His words of command and cheer we stand trembling. But He does not leave us until once more, with all the similitude and sympathy of one of the sons of men, he touches us, saying, "O greatly beloved, fear not ; be strong, yea, be strong !"

And when He has so spoken unto us we are strengthened ; for “ *our God hath commanded our strength.*”

How exquisite the tenderness that breathes through these commands of Jesus : “ Son, take courage !” “ Daughter, take courage !” “ Take courage, doubting disciples, *It is I !*” * Thus, by His own presence and power, He inspires us with that which we shall need all our life long—a high resolve, an undaunted spirit, an intrepid bravery—and coupled with these, steadiness, constancy, and endurance. By all our growth in the knowledge of Christ will these heroic virtues be sure to grow. “ Be,” then, “ of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.”

II.—CONSECRATION.

The second element of success is thus indicated : “ Joshua said unto the people, ‘ SANCTIFY YOURSELVES, FOR TO-MORROW THE LORD WILL DO WONDERS AMONG YOU.’ ” Elsewhere in similar commands, we find acts of purification and abstinence enjoined. The word itself means simply bodily purity ; and as washing was the preparation for each religious service, the term came to signify to set apart ; and as so used, is rendered in our Bibles “ to consecrate,” or “ sanctify ; ” so that the charge now given to the people was virtually this, “ Set yourselves apart to God”—Yield yourselves to Him—Put yourselves in that

* Cf. Matt. ix. 2, Matt. ix. 22 and Matt. xiv. 27.

attitude in which He can with perfect readiness take you up.--Draw nigh unto God, for He is drawing nigh unto you.

The context of this command, which gives such prominence to the wonders which God will do, is a happy correction of a very common notion respecting consecration, as though it were some great giving to God by us, some surrender or sacrifice of what we previously held; in fact, a sort of favor *conferred* upon Him, whereas it is only the readiness to *receive* from Him. Consecration is not a meritorious work of our own, but a willingness to let the Lord work His wonders upon us. It simply means a ready reciprocity.

Yet even this reciprocity may involve surrender in a subordinate way, as it evidently did in the case of the Israelites. They could not possibly receive Canaan, without giving up the wilderness. That command, therefore, "Sanctify yourselves," was a call to heart-searching. It pressed home to all their thoughts this recognition, "We are the Lord's." It could not long remain a matter of doubt with any, whether they stood ready for God to lead them over Jordan or not. The command given them was completely overshadowed by the promise that followed, and yet it was the Promise itself that tested and tried the very intents of their hearts.

It continues to be a part of the manifold wisdom of God to furnish such tests, even in providing our

richest blessings. He who becomes a man must put away his childish things. The lingering child-nature struggles and shrinks from the sacrifice, but the spirit of the strong man uprising, spares not the old treasures as he reaches on to the new. God can not fill our hands with His great and good gifts till we drop the baubles they have held. And so in every onward step, calling us to some surrender, to some sacrifice, He clears away the superficial wrappings of our nature to learn what soundness exists beneath. Jesus Himself is even to be a sign spoken against, that so the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. How often, when on earth, did He disclose to themselves, the true nature of many a half-hearted follower, by some sharp requisition ; or, in the same manner, call out the deepest faith of those who left all and followed Him ! We may well thank Him for everything in the discipline of life, or in the secret conflicts of our own hearts, that gives us this knowledge of ourselves, and brings us to the solemn decision whom we will choose.

The time which is fixed for the blessing of God, follows close upon the preparation—"Sanctify yourselves, for *to-morrow* the Lord will do wonders among you." It is always thus. It is we ourselves who set the times in which our God shall bless us ; for whatever day it be in all our life, that we take for our consecration to Him, He will take the morrow for His wonders. There is no real delay with God, beyond

that which we occasion. There may be seeming delay, for often He works in secret, and mysteriously ; but He always works, and that wondrously, so soon as we are set apart to Him—even as from the first day that Daniel set his heart to understand, and to chasten himself, the Lord Himself came forth to answer him.

Yet precisely here, what misapprehension is there of His ways ! Men fancy that *they* are all ready—even eager for blessing—and they marvel why God delays. He does not delay. If we have, indeed, consecrated ourselves, He has already begun His work ; not where we, perhaps, desired it, nor in a way we looked for, but in the surest way. When the great Builder declares His work begun, we look at once for the imposing structure—and what if we see only an excavation ! By seeming delay, then, as well as by tests of service and of sacrifice, He searches our hearts, and reveals our thoughts to ourselves, as He already beholds them. And if still we see not the wonders which were promised us, shall we not at least hear a voice saying, “ Art thou, then, truly consecrated ? Art thou ready for God to work ? Is there nowhere any holding back ? Is there no sparing of self ?—no secret stipulation ?—no subtle ambition ?—no love of reputation ?—no unhallowed affection ? ” And He who so searches us will hold us waiting, until we are ready to look and

see as He sees, and are really willing to give up our all to God.

Such is the position, doubtless, of not a few who are even perplexed by their failure to go further. They are earnest souls even, that have pressed on beyond their comrades; souls that have gone far enough to see what there is for them over this Jordan. They are servants of the Master, and they have wrought in His field unweariedly. But they long for richer results. They want these ideal possibilities of the Gospel realized. They desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man—to exult in some new Pentecost. But no morrow with its wonders dawns for them. And standing thus upon the very verge of blessing, they ask, as they suppose, in all sincerity, “What doth hinder me?”—and as they see nothing lacking in their consecration, they are disposed to be faithless as to God’s fulfilment of His promise. Alas! for the long, weary waiting of those who thus begin to question God’s ways, instead of their own hearts! He will surely be silent unto them, until they heed what He has already spoken—“Sanctify yourselves—*set yourselves apart.*”

They who are thus turned back from marvelling over the mysterious delays of God, to suspect rather their own sincerity, will soon learn that consecration implies no hollow, hasty work. They become aware that only Faith can do it—that even as the only true

courage was the courage of Faith, so the only true consecration is *the consecration of Faith*. Even this is to be one of the works of God—"Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." No more mistaken counsel can be given to a soul which is conscious that it is not wholly consecrated, than that so often heard—"This is *your* part of the work. Your *will* must put forth all its power, and solemnly resolve that it will dedicate itself to God." He who has learned the extent of his infirmity will answer, 'You bid me do the most difficult task of all myself. Precisely here is my perplexity—that I can not feel sure that my whole will is honest in this surrender, and that I draw nigh with a true heart. My very desire to do it may still be selfish; and that disinclination which I discover, being a part of my will, holds me helpless. I find that I have neither full knowledge of myself, nor full mastery of myself. It is my will itself that is perverse, and treacherous, and unstable; and how can it possibly furnish the power that shall force it into rectitude?' *

* The searching and sententious lines of Herbert's "Hold-fast," will naturally recur to the reader :

"I threatened to observe the strict decree
 Of my dear God with all my power and might ;
 But I was told by one, it could not be ;
 Yet I might trust in God to be my light.
 Then will I trust, said I, in Him alone.
 Nay, even to trust in Him, was also His ;
 We must confess that nothing is our own.
 Then I confess that He my succour is.

Consecration, be it repeated, therefore, can only be the work of Faith. As Faith first encouraged itself in the Lord by looking unto Him, so now Faith yields to this mighty attraction which draws the soul to God. His sovereign will alone can restore to unity and simplicity, the complexity and strife of our being. The kingdom of the heart has been the prey of each new Usurper. Only the Spirit of God can put them all down, and set us up as kings unto Him. Swayed hither and thither by both human and supernatural influences, there can be no stability till Faith elects the Spirit of God as the Sole Possessor.

Ask, then, ye who are seeking to consecrate yourselves to Christ—ask for His fuller revelation. “Look, ye blind, that ye may see.”—He looketh upon you. Listen, ye deaf, that ye may hear, for to you He speaketh. Look and listen until your Faith grows into Love, until you see in Him, One who is worthy of all confidence, and the powerful attractions of whose nature so tell upon your yielding soul, that you can not possibly hold back anything, or allow the least reserve between yourself and Him, because “The love of Christ constraineth you.” No forced surrender can possibly meet the claim of God upon

But to have naught is ours, not to confess
That we have naught. I stood amazed at this,
Much troubled, till I heard a friend express
That all things were more ours by being His.
What *Adam* had, and forfeited for all,
Christ keepeth now, who cannot fail or fall.”

you. It is the citadel of the Will itself that must be yielded, even to its last reluctance. It is the love and loyalty of your inmost souls, that Jesus calls for, and they are never self-commanded. As you fully believe, you will fully love. As you fully love, you will fully give yourselves to God. Thus only can you be consecrated to Him. Love has no will save this, "I delight to do *Thy* will." Love makes all labor light; love makes all sacrifices sweet; love sees the crown over every cross; love has no fear; love never stipulates; love never needs to test itself by future possibilities; and love, when Christ Himself tests it, can straightway answer, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee!"

III.—COMMITTAL.

We come now to that preparation which, through the power of God, passes over into performance itself. The heart being full of courage because of its faith, and full of devotion because of its love, must now take the step of a full committal to His ways; and this also must be the work of Faith.

When the Lord led His people through the Red Sea, His winds had been long blowing over it, and they saw a path prepared for them. They saw also the outstretched rod of Moses that seemed to pledge the safety of their passage. So that though it was "by faith," that "they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land," yet it could not be said

‘they walked by faith, and not by sight.’ Rather, they walked by a faith, that had sight for its helper.

But now the demand upon their faith was absolute. No sign or token was given. No outstretched rod was seen, and they heard the roarings of no winds. They saw no moving of the waters. They had no outward security. They had only a simple promise of their God. In truth, all outward sight seemed to contradict that promise. Jordan was overflowing all its banks, giving the stream a double breadth. But not even this was to be changed, till faith had ventured upon the word of their God. “It shall come to pass,” was the promise, “*as soon as* the soles of the feet of the priests that bare the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap.”* The first step was to be taken *in* the waters. They were called upon not only to face the difficulties, but to enter them. They were not to ask God to *prove* His power first. They were to *trust* Him first, and then should they see as they followed on to know the Lord, “His going forth” to be “prepared as the morning.” There does not appear to have been a moment’s hesitation on the part of the priests.

The record follows almost in the very words of the

* Josh. iii. 13.

promise, "And it came to pass when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; and as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,) that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan; and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho."*

How fatal had been a halt, although but one step short of the brim of the waters. Even the foot up-

* Joshua iii. 14-16. "On the broken edge of the river—so the scene which follows is placed before us by the narrative—the band of priests stood with the Ark upon their shoulders. At a distance of nearly a mile in the rear stood the great mass of the army. Suddenly the full bed of the Jordan was direct before them. High up the river—'very far'—'in Adam, the city which is beside Zaretan'—that is, at a distance of nearly thirty miles from the place of the Israelite encampment, 'the waters which came down from above,' from the Sea of Galilee, stood, and rose up in a barrier; and 'those that came down towards the sea of the Desert, the salt sea failed, and were cut off.' The scene presented to us, therefore, is of the river-bed dried up from north to south, as far as the eye could reach—an image which, however it may be explained, is important to bear in mind, to avoid a confused notion which is often formed from a supposed parallel with the account of the Red Sea."—*Dean Stanley's Sinai and Palestine*, p. 298.

lifted, ready to fall as soon as the path was ready, would have waited in vain. The promise was addressed only to the faith that, without seeing signs and wonders, could yet believe. That one step taken which proved their faith, and placed it in a position of entire receptivity—then God could prove His faithfulness and manifest His power. His wonders follow at once.

The lesson which is here taught us is of the utmost importance, showing us the very essence of all true faith. Mature faith must be able to dare and to endure, with no other stay than seeing Him who is invisible. Our Father does, indeed, stretch out the hand of yearning tenderness to steady the tottering steps of a babe. In His pity and compassion He will not forbid the poor cripple his staff; but the faith of full years and of steady strength, can never be developed by continued indulgence. It must be exercised by reason of use. And so God leads His children out at last beyond all visible stays and props, or even stepping-stones, where hearing only His voice, "Go forward"—

"Nothing before, and nothing behind,
The steps of Faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath."

Again, that God instead of giving His people some visible aid for their crossing, set before them a most

visible hindrance, doubling the danger and difficulty to the natural eye, is in perfect accord with our advanced experience. Only how often does the simplicity of our faith fail to equal theirs. It would have been a most natural thing for an Israelite to say, rising up that morning and looking wistfully over Jordan, "We can not possibly cross to-day. This can not be the time, for it is high flood. Surely the Lord will have us wait awhile until the waters abate." It would have been natural, even for such doubts to become a denial of God's word, as the suggestion followed—'The days for such wonders are past. There were evident reasons why Jehovah should lead our fathers through the Red Sea, and inaugurate our national life with a miracle. But the necessity has past. Forty years have gone by since the time of those mighty signs and wonders. Is it not presumptuous to look for the repetition of such a miracle? Let us use our own judgment and strength as best we may. When Jordan has fallen again, we can either find its fords, or bridge it at some favorable point.' But happily we have no such record. They had learned at last the dangers of doubt, and the blessedness of believing God.

But what of our own record? In the face of promises as distinct as were given to them, are not many of us found questioning the result? It is the first instinctive impulse of unbelief to seek a sign—to have something to interpose between itself and the

bare word of God. And so, how often is the question asked: 'If God be really disposed to bring me into this glorious liberty, will there not be at least some token of it? Shall I find no evidence of it in my own altered feelings; and especially will not the Lord prepare the way by lowering the opposing tide of temptation?' The Word of our God needs neither sign nor surety. Be it a promise, or be it a command, it matters not; for every command has a promise for its kernel. We are to go forward to obey His commands—forward to receive His promises—forward in faith—forward though difficulties double. Not from the withdrawal of these is our strength to come, but from Him who has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Yet, in the face of this assurance, the complaint is heard on all sides, 'I am at this present time exposed to unusual pressure—Outward circumstances combine against me. Within, temptations and weakness meet, and my peculiar temperament is tried by all that can trouble it most. Is it not too much to expect deliverance? After all, these wonders of grace must have been meant for apostles. At least, they belong to the early ages. It certainly does not please God to work so in our own day, unless it be with some very extraordinary people. Why should I be so presumptuous as to expect it? Should I not even dishonor the Lord in attempting to claim such special promises, when I am well-nigh certain to fail, and draw back in

confusion and shame? Surely, the Lord never intended me to obey any such command, or receive any such great promise. I stand, therefore, excused.'

The Word of God allows not a particle of license to any such quibbling. To whom of all mankind has God not said, "Be holy?" Whom does He release from that law of blessing that girds His universe? If we can find a soul excepted from His commands, that soul must also be excepted from His promises. But how significant it is that while our faith is not energetic enough to accept the promises of God, we are not consistent enough to really loose our consciences from the commands, but secretly hope sometime to find a way, under favoring circumstances, to do that which we can not quite believe that God is able, at any time, to do for us.

In truth, we are accustomed to discount the promises of God, in a way that would utterly dishonor any fellow-being. Whenever we place full confidence in a friend, a solemn assurance, though it be but a word, is decisive. But if we thus receive the witness of men to their own ability to aid us, how shall we not receive also that witness of God which is so much greater—greater because He is not only full of truth in purposing, but also never forgets His promise, and can never be thwarted in its performance. Our confidence can not be misplaced as it rests upon His promises, seeing that the slightest of them is built

four square upon these strong foundations — His Righteousness, His Truth, His Love, His Power.

This, then, is the foot dipped in the brimming waters—when we have heard the Lord calling us to follow Him, “To walk worthy of Him unto all pleasing,” to have “spirit, soul, and body, preserved blameless unto His coming,” to let “the God of Peace sanctify us wholly;” —when we have heard this call, to take then His promise, “*Faithful is He that calleth you who also will do it,*” and to go on, though confronted by temptation, and encompassed with weakness; to go on, as though these were not—so stepping out of self and its limitations, into Christ, and all His boundless possibilities; and finding that it is no longer we, that live, that walk, but Christ, who even as He has promised, dwells in us, and walks in us.

Again, the foot dipped in the brimming waters declares emphatically that *faith is to precede feeling*. Incalculable mischief has crept into Christian experience through the neglect of this simple truth. A religion that rests upon feeling, for either its security or comfort, will find itself tottering and trembling to the end. Yet so common and so great has been the loss sustained in this way, that, having recognized it, we are now not a little in danger of an extreme reaction. There are some who, at least, seem to teach that faith is not only to precede feeling, but to supersede it. Our feelings, they say, are not at all to be regarded. At no stage can their evidence be taken. This is

plainly unscriptural. Very crude indeed must be the conception of truth, where a soul in the midst of unsatisfactory and unsanctified feelings, settles the whole matter, by regarding itself complete in Christ through faith alone, and so allows its evil frames and feelings to go on unchecked.

Nothing that we discover in heart or life, need hinder us in coming to Christ to seek deliverance from it. We may even use our worst discoveries as our plea in coming; "For the whole have no need of a Physician, but they that are sick." Nor will my sickness make the Physician displeased with me in my first application to him. Yet, if he has given me all that should restore me, and my own wilfulness or carelessness still keep me in the same feeble condition, he will be greatly displeased with me. Now, my feelings are not the real seat of the disease, and yet there we find our surest *symptoms* as a rule. I can not possibly be in health with such disordered feelings. I ignore them at my peril. And so as I come to Christ—feeling no glow of love, no peace that passeth understanding, no joy unspeakable—I am not to regard these as reasons for *not* coming to Him, or as hindrances. This very trouble gives me a right to come. I can appeal now to the compassion of my Healer—"Lord, I am well-nigh sick unto death." But if after He has healed me, and taught me the conditions of sustaining health, I find myself again unloving, cold, perturbed, fretted, moody, I

have not the least right to say that all is well, and that disregarding all this, I am to believe myself fully accepted through Christ. Unless I bring this disturbance to Him for confession, forgiveness, and healing, I am utterly at fault.

Our feelings *are* of importance. The same Creator who set the faithful nerves as sentinels along all the lines of the senses, to give due warning of danger and disease, gave a corresponding sensitiveness to our souls. Faith is not to discharge this as unnecessary, but to retain it in her service. If it be well with our faith, it will also be well with our feelings. If we have the Spirit of Christ, then the fruits of the Spirit will be ours also; and many of these fruits are precisely what we are accustomed to class loosely under the head of feelings. They are such as love, joy, peace. They are not the root, but they are the fruit; they furnish finally the test, not of God's power, but of our reception of that power.

The Apostle John repeatedly appeals to such tests as these respecting our adoption, and growth in grace. The words so often used by him — "*Hereby we know*" — most certainly teach us that while looking unto Jesus, we are to see also, that both in outward acts and inward states, we are becoming *like Jesus*. Having faith first, we shall have all holy frames, and heavenly feelings.

And now let us take one more glance over this triple preparation of courage, and consecration, and

committal. Each of these represents a practical truth. Each is a step in harmony with the will of God. Each is necessary to the development of effectual faith. And yet such are the simplicity and the speed of Faith, that the three will seem as but one step, and in action will need no such analysis.

No one will ever pass over into the fulness of blessing who fails to set his feet in these old way-marks. It is impossible, without the courageous faith that can say, "My heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." It is impossible unless we can say, "Lord, I am thine, entirely thine." And how can it ever be more than a beautiful ideal to those who can not say, 'I am so taking the promises of God as to act upon them. I am following along their track, fully persuaded that God Himself will perform all that He has promised. I count His promises my open pathway. I venture upon them, and know that it shall come to pass according to His word. I commit my whole being to Him in well doing. He will remove every obstacle from my path. He will guide me. He will endue me with power from on high. I dip my feet in this Jordan. I die to all confidence in myself. I rise to all completeness in Jesus. Life in myself, has been a failure. Life in the Spirit of God, is my hope of triumph now. I pass beyond the bounds of human power, and *risen in Christ*, I set no bounds to that which He will do for me—exceeding abundantly above all I ask or think. I believe in Jesus. and

therefore I shall see the glory of God. I trust Him, and I see Him at once arrest the whole, resistless, swollen tide, holding the waves of terror and temptation, cut off even very far away, so that I fear no evil.'

With the COURAGE OF FAITH, the CONSECRATION OF FAITH, and the COMMITTAL OF FAITH, "WE WHO HAVE BELIEVED DO ENTER INTO REST."

CHAPTER VI.

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT.

“AND JOSHUA SAID UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, COME HITHER, AND HEAR THE WORDS OF THE LORD YOUR GOD. AND JOSHUA SAID, HEREBY YE SHALL KNOW THAT THE LIVING GOD IS AMONG YOU, AND THAT HE WILL WITHOUT FAIL DRIVE OUT FROM BEFORE YOU THE CANAANITES, AND THE HITTITES, AND THE HIVITES, AND THE PERIZZITES, AND THE GIRGASHITES, AND THE AMORITES, AND THE JEBUSITES. BEHOLD, THE ARK OF THE COVENANT OF THE LORD OF ALL THE EARTH PASSETH OVER BEFORE YOU INTO JORDAN.”—(*Josh.* iii. 9–11.)

This it was that was to stay the waters—“THE ARK OF THE COVENANT OF THE LORD OF ALL THE EARTH.” Not till all the people had passed over, was the Ark of the Lord to pass over. The priests who bore it stood firm on dry ground, in the midst of Jordan, till all had passed.

The Ark here assumed its proper prominence. Hitherto a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of

fire by night, hovering *over* the Tabernacle, had guided them. Now the Ark itself was to go visibly before them, as the immediate symbol of the Living God, and the pledge of His presence and power in their midst. It was the most sacred portion, by far, of the hallowed structure. More fully than all else it represented Christ. Especially was it adapted to suggest His Person, and Presence, and to show forth His work, as living, as dying, and as alive forevermore.

In common with those other portions of the Tabernacle which represented Christ, the Ark was made of shittim-wood, and overlaid with gold. For everywhere the same blessed lesson is repeated—the union of the human and the Divine—the very man and very God. And yet it is the human nature that is overlaid and glorified by the Divine—taken into it and shielded by it, and so preserved and ennobled.

The Ark held also, in security, the Tables of the Law. This was, indeed, the office for which it was appointed ; and nothing could so establish the high nature of Law, and so prove its essence to be the very mind of God, as to assign it a home in the most sacred spot of all, as the very regalia of His realm.

This same Law, as at first given, was broken by the people, before Moses could reach them with the written Tables in his hand—his own breaking of the Stones only representing their breaking of the Covenant it-

self. The second set of Tables was not entrusted to the hands of men, but was placed at once in the Ark, which was prepared before he went up into the mount.* Thus, till Christ came, every man who touched the Law broke it; and though it were the least of the Commandments, yet was he "guilty of all." That is to say, it mattered not through which *line* of the Law the fracture ran, or whether its fragments were small or large, *broken anywhere it ceased to be a whole*. It was dishonored throughout. But Jesus came and fulfilled *all* righteousness. He so hid the Law in His heart, that there was never the slightest fracture of either Tablet—never a sin against God or against man. In Christ first, was exhibited that new Covenant, in which the Law should be put into the mind, and written in the heart. It was so written in the mind of Christ, that He had perfect *knowledge* of the Law (an aspect of obedience often greatly overlooked), and it was so put into His heart, that He had perfect *love* of it. He came, saying, "I delight to do thy will, O my God!" This was His life-work through all its phases of waiting, and working, and suffering.

But the Mercy-seat rested upon, and covered the Ark. Mercy could find a basis where the Law was fully kept. Mercy and Truth there met together. He who was first the antitype of the Ark, in fulfill-

* Deut. x. 1-5.

ing the Law in His life, became then the antitype of the Mercy-seat as set forth in His death for a propitiation* for sins. He honored the Law by His own keeping of it, and then, as the far greater task, honored it by atoning for the sins of those who had broken it. The great truth taught by the Mercy-seat, is exhibited in the sprinkling of the Blood upon it, on the great day of Atonement.

But still a further task remained—to provide for the keeping of this Law, by those who were forgiven their iniquities; and this glorious truth is exhibited in the two Cherubic figures, which formed the completion and crown of the Mercy-seat. “*Beaten out of the matter of the mercy-seat,*” as a part of it, their signification must be kindred with its own. They plainly represent some provision of the great salvation from sin. In form and posture, they present as clearly as possible, the idea of living and reigning. Now the living, reigning Jesus has still this other work to do in honoring the Law, *to enable His people to keep it*, by writing it also in *their* minds and hearts. In this great office the Holy Spirit is His Co-worker. So we behold the upper portion of the Mercy-seat assume the form of two Cherubim, with outspread wings, and faces toward the Mercy-seat. Between them God dwelt. Thence He shone forth. And while we should tread softly amid such sanctities as

* (Rom. iii. 25) *ἱλαστήριον*; i. e., *Mercy-Seat*. Compare Heb. ix. 5.

these, of which even an Apostle did not see fit to 'speak particularly,' one can not but feel that any interpretation falls short, which fails to recognize the manifestation of Divine Natures—*not in similitudes, but in symbols*. They were a part of the Mercy-seat—they were enthroned—they stood in closest proximity to the Invisible God. They could not signify angels, for angels have no share in the high office of Salvation; to angels God has not put in subjection the world to come. But in these immediate supporters of the Most High—these Indicators of the Invisible—we can recognize no lower beings than the very Sharers of His own Being—*Christ and the Spirit*.

We are not for a moment to think of these Cherubim, as suggesting any likeness of their *persons*, but simply set forth as symbols of their *offices*, as was everything else in this structure. And so they stand erect, as full of life. They spread out their wings, for they are full of all holy activity. Their faces look one to another, and toward the Mercy-seat; for in their holy fellowship, their one aim is to develop this work of atonement to its richest results of righteousness. It is the Risen Jesus, and it is His Holy Spirit, who have now to carry out the Covenant in the hearts of men. They alone can write it there. They alone can give true knowledge of what it is. They alone can incline the heart to heed it. Those who are redeemed from the curse of a broken law, find their refuge here. They come under the protection

of Christ and the Spirit. Their Power and their Presence are the wings that overshadow them; as their Lord Himself has promised, "All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth;" and, "Lo I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world."

In the Ark of the Covenant, then, we behold the entirety of Christ's relation to the Law, as developed in three great parts. We see at once a LIFE which is our perfect *pattern*; a DEATH which is our perfect *propitiation*; and a LIVING FOREVERMORE, which is our perfect *provision* for living also; even the two-fold might of an Advocate with the Father, and another Comforter with us.* Under those outspread wings, our human life expands to meet the measures of things divine. This is the security that we have now in Christ; and hereby we know that the Living God is among us, and will, without fail, drive out every enemy before us.

In this same Ark, as placed afterwards in the Temple, we find some significant changes, at which it may be well to glance. The Cherubim are there made of olive-wood, overlaid with gold, instead of being as in the Tabernacle, all of gold. *As man*, Christ does not yet *reign*; but when He so reigns, we shall reign also. The Temple sets forth the greater glory of His Kingdom, when firmly established. Redeemed man in that Kingdom, "when the Son of Man shall come

* Cf. John xiv. 16, and 1 John ii. 1—In both Παράκλητος.

in His glory," is to be even enthroned.* They that have part in the first resurrection, are to "live and reign with Christ." Upon the right hand of the King is to stand "the Queen in gold of Ophir."† Christ, the Bridegroom, is to present unto Himself "a glorious Church," as His chosen Bride.‡ Now, it is Christ and His Spirit, who reign, by virtue of their Divinity, as shadowed in the temporary structure of the Tabernacle, where the Cherubim were all of gold. But *then* it will be the "*olive-wood overlaid with gold.*" As the wood is the emblem of humanity, so the olive-wood symbolizes its interpenetration by the Spirit, which found one of its most appropriate figures in the oil-olive. Christ through the Holy Ghost taking our nature upon Him, and we through the Holy Ghost becoming partakers of His Divine nature—He the only begotten, Eternal Son of the Father, born of woman, and we born again of God, are yet to be brought into that wondrous union, which is by pre-eminence the "*great mystery*" of the Gospel, as well as God's "eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord." Christ is yet to be *all* for His Church, and His Church *all* for Him. Few know this hope of their calling—none unless God hath revealed it unto them by His Spirit. To all others it is as an idle tale, heard, but neither believed nor understood.

The Ark of the Covenant, then, that goes before us

* Rev. iii. 21.

† Ps. xlv. 9.

‡ Eph. v.

is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a glorious thing to have a *Covenant embodied in a Person*, to have the "exceeding great and precious promises" made secure to us in a still more precious Promiser.

But the Ark of the Covenant, borne on before all the people into the opening pathway, told not only of Jesus, but of Jesus as our *Forerunner*—the first to pass through the barriers that shut us out from our inheritance. He went down first of all, setting His feet in the brim of the waters, as our Priest, and the Prince of Faith. He passed on into the flood, that swelled for Him beyond all bounds, as it never swelled before or since, and never can again. For He touched the waters of sorrow, that they might henceforth be cut off, and our sorrow turned into joy. He touched the waves of Temptation, and they rolled away beneath His feet. He met the Tempter, only that He might depart from him, and that his works might be destroyed. He touched the billows of death, and they also rolled far away. He tasted death, only that through death, He might destroy him who held its power. Every high wave that was ready to overwhelm humanity, was stayed as the Son of man entered.

For while the Lord Jesus went before us as the Son of God, He went also as Man, and as the Representative of Man. It is therefore the Baptism of Humanity that we witness in His own. As the Son of man, He rested entirely upon the power of the

Spirit. Conceived by the Holy Ghost, He could live a sinless human life. Baptized by the descent of the Spirit, at His baptism in Jordan, He went "in the power of the Spirit" to His ministry of words and works. And yet He had still another baptism to be baptized with, so emancipating, so glorious, that He could only say, "How am I *straitened* till it be accomplished."* Therefore, when through the Eternal Spirit, He offered Himself without spot unto God, then the Body also shared in the wondrous power. It could not be holden of death; it rose, passed into new freedom, was transfigured, spiritualized. For forty days on earth, and ten in heaven, the work went on. And now, as soon as the rich anointing oil that was poured forth, had covered the head of the great High Priest, then it began to flow down to the skirts of the garments. So *when Jesus was glorified, the Holy Ghost was given.*

Henceforth, there was a new mold for man—the *Son of Man glorified*. Whatsoever He was, or will be as man, that He would have us also become. And wheresoever He goes, there it is His will that we should follow. The exceeding greatness of God's power to us-ward who believe, is only to be measured by what "He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in

* See on this interpretation of Luke xii. 50, some extremely interesting thoughts on "the Glorification of Christ" in Chap. xv. of *Jesus and the Coming Glory*, by Joel Jones, LL.D.

the heavenly places." Nor let our faith falter, as this measure reaches on and on—"far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;"—and still on—for "He hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."*

These are not the words of ecstatic song, but "the words of truth and soberness." And yet, how shall the Christian be persuaded of them, and embrace them?—for there are multitudes who miss them. In their narrow thought, and in feeble faith, they see not the great object of God in drawing nigh unto us in the flesh. They put Him back again far from them. They receive the blessing of His humanity, so far as to claim in Him the friend of sinners; but they do not let Him come nigh enough to be truly their brother—much less are they looking for Him, and making ready for Him, as the Bridegroom.† They still measure their risen life by their old life, and forget that Christ leads us on to that true ideal of man which first appeared in Him. It is a new path to a new glory. None of us has "gone this way heretofore;" for man was not created thus, nor has he ever been able, nor will he ever be of himself, to reach such a height. It is *the calling of the Church*,

* Eph. i. 19-23.

† Rev. xix. 7.

even to be FOR *Christ*, IN *Christ*, LIKE *Christ*, and WITH *Christ forever*.

Yet, let it never be forgotten, that a reverent space was to be left between the people and the Ark. The Ark was to stand in its solitary majesty, upheld so high upon the shoulders of the Priests, that while supporting it, they should not screen it. And then, two thousand cubits intervened between it and their pathway. "Come not near unto it," was the charge, "that ye may know the way by which ye must go."* In all our drawing nigh unto God, we are never to lay aside the "reverence and godly fear." Whenever mysticism, in her extreme forms, has forgotten this, there has invariably followed, first, the indulgence of self, and then, that which Neander has so aptly called "The gulf of pantheistic self-deification."†

A vast space must ever lie between our *derived and dependent life*, and His life and glory, who is God over all, and never will the life which is so closely united with His, become identical.

But while the Ark upborne in Jordan teaches us such wondrous truth, another touch of power is given to the picture, in its tarrying till all was accomplished. "For the priests, which bare the Ark, stood in the

* Josh. iii. 4.

† The whole passage in which he traces "the very thin and subtle line which often separates truth from error," is a profound analysis of the tendency referred to. See his "Church History" (Clark's Ed.), Vol. IX., pp. 535-6.

midst of Jordan, *until everything was finished* that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua; and *the people hastened and passed over.*"* All these glorious provisions of the Gospel stand secure, till all the ransomed have learned the power of Christ's resurrection. Not only has the Lord Jesus gone before us to prepare our way, but He sits at the right hand of God, "*waiting* until His enemies be made His foot-stool."† How majestically calm and patient those waiting years of Christ, because so confident. When He purposed to crown His Temple with this High Tower of the Church, He counted the cost, and found that He had sufficient to finish it.

The looker-on, knowing little of Divine Art, may "despise the day of small things," and often question if the Gospel has not failed in the accomplishment of its full design. But a word has been spoken more sure than that of any earthly builder: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, his hands shall also finish it."‡ Those blessed hands have never laid down the work. Whether it be a

* Josh. iv. 10.

† Heb. x. 13, ἐκδεχόμενος.

‡ Zech. iv. 9. "It must be remembered in reading these prophecies that as David is the type of Christ, and not only so, but Christ Himself is also called *David* by the Prophets, so Zerubbabel (the seed of David, and leader of the people from captivity, and builder of the Temple) is not only a *type* of Christ, but Christ is *called* Zerubbabel."—See Bishop Wordsworth's *Minor Prophets*.

day, or a thousand years, it is all one in His sight. He waits, while to so many His "long-suffering is salvation;" He waits, and as the long procession of His followers files on, He ever reassures their hearts, "Lo, I am with you *all the days*, even unto the end of the world!" He waits, until "everything be finished." The great Architect will eventually suffer no blemish, and no lack, in His great work. And as once when He laid the foundation, upon His cross in Sacrifice, He cried aloud that it was finished, so will He yet cry louder with the shout of exceeding joy, when the whole Salvation is finished. "He shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace, unto it."* And that which is true for the Church which is His body, is true for each member of it. The Apostle Paul might well say to his beloved Philippians, "I am confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it, even until the day of Jesus Christ." He has learned very little of the character of Christ, who can think of Him as possibly forsaking the works of His own hands. The prayer of David that He would not do it, was one of full confidence, for it is preceded by these words of trust, "The Lord *will perfect* that which concerneth me: Thy Mercy, O Lord, endureth forever."† And yet, while this is absolutely true, it is possible upon the

* Zech. iv. 7.

† Ps. cxxxviii. 8.

other hand, to "frustrate the Grace of God" in our individual growth, and so even while saved, to suffer loss; and possible also, to delay His coming for His Church.* Blessed are all who can say in sincerity, "I do not frustrate the Grace of God."

In the history of this crossing of Jordan, there is a beautiful conjunction of God's waiting, and of man's hastening. The Priests and the Ark stood still; but "the people *hasted* and passed over." Many commentators assume that they hastened from fear. But while the form of the verb does not in the least indicate this, it would also be out of all harmony with the history. Hastening for fear, when so many miles above them the bed of Jordan lay dry! Hastening for fear, when they saw the Ark of God and His Priests far nearer any possible danger than themselves! Hastening for fear over Jordan, when their fathers had marched through the flood of the Red Sea on foot, rejoicing in God! Such haste would have been both utterly unseemly, and an evil omen for the conquest. There were other reasons for making all possible haste. Were they not keeping the priests of God with their arms outstretched, to bear up their holy burden? And moreover, there, dis-

*Cf. 1 Cor. iii. 15, and 2 Peter iii. 12. See Dean Alford's Greek Testament upon *σπεύδοντας*, in the latter passage, which he renders thus: "Hastening the advent of the day of God." If it be possible to hasten Christ's coming it is also possible to hinder it.

tinct before them, beautiful in the soft, rich light of the early morning, lay the homes, and vineyards, and fields, which they were to possess. It was but a little space to cross—they could see the very flowers bowing with the weight of the dew—a little space, and an open path. A few steps, and their feet would be in Canaan ; a few moments, and the weary waiting of years would end. As the tired laborer hastes at the first glimpse of his home, so must they have hastened. There may have been, also, some innocent rivalry to be among the first to touch the further shore. All these motives, indeed, might easily combine as they hastened and passed over. And shall not the thought that Jesus waits, till all be gathered in—waits, without coming yet “in His power and great glory”—waits for His coming and His espousals—shall not this thought stir up His Church, not only to be looking for, but *hastening* His coming? By all the diligence we give to make our calling and election sure—by all our diligence in adding to our faith the graces that complete it—by all our hastening to pass over and share the risen life of Christ, and receive the fulness of His blessing, do we at the same time render it possible for *Him* to hasten? The love of Christ constraining us, will urge us onward. And who that has had “the eyes of the understanding opened,” to behold what are “the riches of the glory” of this inheritance in Christ Jesus, would not fain ‘to his

speed add wings,' that he might enter it, and at once possess it?

When Israel came out of Egypt, two opposite commands were given to them: the first, "*Stand still* and see the salvation of God;" the second, "*Speak to my people that they go forward.*" So again, upon the banks of Jordan, there were days of quiet resting, before they could hasten and pass over. No one can ever *go forward* in the strength of God, till he has first *stood still* in his own utter helplessness. But when the call is heard, and the promise given, then go forward he must, or forfeit all before him. All these gracious promises, so ancient, so often renewed—all the provision for the future in the land—all this patient preparation—all the stay of God's presence and power—all these are forfeited, if he fail to go forward in the obedience of faith. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them."

Most ruinous to faith, is that serious sentimentality which *admires* the truth, *studies* it, *teaches* it, and even *thinks to hold it as its own*; but does not after all suffer itself *to be possessed by it*. Truth asks for no patronizing. It calls for humble, submissive, loyal hearts. Its command is, "*Go forward—HASTEN.*" And, indeed, it is not enough that we go forward. We must also HASTEN, if the fulness of blessing is ever to be ours. We are solemnly told that only as we "*give diligence*," shall we make our calling and

election sure; that only as we "*show the same diligence*," shall we have "the full assurance of hope unto the end." Respecting this very type we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Let us, therefore, *hasten** to enter into this rest;" and again, we learn how it is that in "*giving all diligence*," "an entrance shall be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom." †

The Lord of the Covenant passing on before us at once our ARK, our PRIEST, our LEADER, calls to His halting disciples, "*Follow me—FOLLOW ME.*" And "he that believeth shall not make haste" ‡ for any fear; but for the joy of following Him, whithersoever He goeth, "thy children shall make haste!" §

* Heb. iv. 11, *Σπουδάσωμεν*—elsewhere rendered, be diligent.

† 2 Pet. i. 5-11.

‡ Is. xxviii. 16.

§ Is. xlix. 17.

CHAPTER VII.

MEMORIAL STONES.

“THESE STONES SHALL BE FOR A MEMORIAL
UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL FOREVER.”
—(*Josh.* iv. 7.)

After the crossing of Jordan, immediate steps were taken to keep the great event alive to all coming generations. By express command of the Lord, twelve stones were carried from the bed of Jordan, where the priests had stood, and were set up at Gilgal, where the children of Israel lodged that night. As the song of Moses preserved the memory of the Red Sea Crossing, so now that they have at last reached a spot which is not to be left behind in journeying, a more solid memorial is to bear witness to the wonderful works of the Lord.

The lessons to be learned from these stones of memorial, are more simple than many others in this history, and yet of too much importance to be wholly slighted. The first suggested, is the duty of “well remembering” whatever the Lord has done. There are steps in our Christian course which can never be repeated in act, but which need often to be repeated

in vivid remembrance. The blessed influences of a moment may thus be diffused over a lifetime. It may often happen, also, that the significance of an act not fully recognized at the time, may so grow upon the soul that, like those fruits which mellow long after they are gathered, its real blessedness is tasted in far distant years. Indeed, the events are very few which assume their full importance at the time. The thought of this should quiet that keen regret, which would fain transfer to the past, the fuller comprehension of the present. Mere sentiment might thus receive a finer gratification; but still all really solid and substantial uses may be served by a right remembrance.

On the other hand, forgetfulness of our past blessings and of the wonderful ways of our God, is unspeakable loss. He who has "forgotten that he was purged from his old sins," has lost the very main-spring of Christian progress. For as remembrance means renewal, so does forgetfulness mean forfeiture. A lively faith will always be blessed with a clear memory, and thus forgetfulness is one of the earliest and surest symptoms of unbelief. "They soon forgot His works," is equivalent to saying that their faith had waned. So Jesus upbraids His disciples who, after twice seeing the multitude fed by Him, were heard reasoning because they had no bread—"And do ye not remember?"* Throughout the Epistles remark-

* Mark viii. 18.

able stress is laid upon the power of such recollection. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, that if they kept in memory that which he had preached and they received, they should be saved.* And to the Ephesians, seated in heavenly places, he writes: "Wherefore remember!" They were still to bear, constantly in mind that they had once been far off, and were made nigh only by the blood of Jesus. Again, how earnestly he charges Timothy, "Of these things put them in remembrance." Still more striking are the words of the Apostle Peter, who announces his design in both his Epistles to be this, to "stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance." † Well taught as had been his hearers, and profound as was his own knowledge of the truth, there yet seemed to him nothing so pressing as this. "Wherefore," he writes, "I will not be negligent to *put you always in remembrance* of these things, though ye know them and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by *putting you in remembrance*. Moreover, I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things *always in remembrance*." ‡ In these Athenian days, when men spend their time either in telling or hearing some new thing, and even in the house of God listen restlessly to old truth, we have need to be reminded of this high

* 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2.

† 2 Pet. iii. 1.

‡ 2 Pet. i. 12-15.

authority for such reiteration of it, as shall keep it always in mind. And it is safe to say that whenever the truth, as already heard, has been assimilated, there will always be fresh eagerness to hear it again, as both new and old. It is through such constant remembrance, that faith is found ripening into ever richer experiences.

As to the significance of the stones themselves thus set up at Gilgal, there are two interpretations—not, however, in conflict, but the one being rather continued and completed in the other. We may regard them, in the first place, and with reference to the foothold they supplied, as representing the word and promises of God, which are the stay and support of the soul; and then in their fuller meaning, that same word as embodied in the risen life of Believers, and especially in the twelve Apostles.

As to the first of these meanings, we have to note that the stones were taken out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm. To hold the Ark steadily up before the eyes of the people who looked to this as their security, there was needed firm footing—such footing as could be found only on a rock. Doubtless the first efforts of the priests would be to secure this standing. And whether we regard the bearers of the Ark as representing Christ, the Upholder of His own Covenant, or as still further signifying the delegation of this priestly privilege to others—what in either case could give firm foothold,

save that Word of God, which is very sure and very steadfast? "The True Sayings of God"—"The exceeding great and precious promises"—these furnish a firm foundation in the deepest depths. Brought out of the horrible pit and the miry clay, the feet may be set upon these as on a rock.

Each priest stood upon his own stone, and then a man out of each tribe was appointed to bring up each one a stone. Their distinctness was not to be lost in the monument as a whole, for the question of coming ages was to be, "What mean ye by *these stones*?" Practically, it is not upon the entire revelation of God, but upon some one portion of it, that each man takes his stand. Any one of the promises appropriated singly in an hour of need, will yield far more support than a general conviction of the truth of all. Because there is always some promise that is not only secure, but precisely adapted to our present need, and which while it does not distinctly include, yet powerfully suggests the whole Gospel. Christian Biography abounds with instances, where an epoch of life was characterized by the vivid apprehension of some single saying, out of all the many words of God.

It is well that there should be many stones, and many witnesses; that as human needs are definite and varied, so should be also the instrumentalities. Each true witness for God can only bear his witness from his own experience, and in his own way; and

there will always be those that could receive no other. Many ropes may be thrown from the life-boat ; it is salvation to grasp but one—*the nearest*. Twelve manner of fruits grow, each in their season, upon the tree of life ; it is the best sustenance for the hungry to take that which is *ripest*. By twelve gates will the holy city be entered, and the right gate for all those who come from the north, and from the south, from the east, and from the west, is that which we see upon our own side, and can reach by the shortest road. And so while there are twelve stones, to each his own stone will seem the strongest and surest. That promise of God in which he first clearly finds the resurrection-power of Jesus, must needs be the most precious. Again and again will he prove it. Like the sword of David, it is that with which he triumphed at the first, and “*there is none like that.*”

As these stones were set up at Gilgal, and they gathered round them, on that most memorable night of first resting in the land of rest, how naturally would each of the priests point to his own stone, and say, “Upon this one it was that my feet stood firm ;” while another near him would make answer, “And that same stone it was that I brought up upon my shoulder.” The joy of all would be multiplied by the special joy on the part of each ; and their sense of possession in the whole memorial, be heightened by the fact of their peculiar portion in a part.

It would furnish a most interesting study, to con-

sider in the case of the Apostles, so far as we have a record of their faith, what it was that was the personal stand-point of each. And another study might be made more complete, in considering what twelve true sayings of God, would best set forth the manifoldness and adaptiveness of His truth; and whose feet also they had stayed, and on whose shoulders they had been carried as trophies.

But without attempting this, let one stone be here brought over, and set up as a memorial; not only because personally, exceedingly precious, but also because it is so broad that the whole world might stand there, if they would. "HE THAT SPARED NOT HIS OWN SON, BUT DELIVERED HIM UP FOR US ALL, HOW SHALL HE NOT WITH HIM ALSO FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS?" As in a granite rock, glittering with its clear crystals, so out of this strong logic of the Gospel, there flashes all the light of love. There it stands in the past—*that great fact*—that Christ died—died because "God so loved the world." Such a gift once given, what else shall He not give!

"Behold His greatest gift of all is free,
And pledges every lesser gift to thee!"

It was in vain that Archimedes sighed for his $\pi\omicron\omega\sigma\tau\omega$ from which to move the earth; but in the marvellous mechanics of Grace, the Cross of Christ is that stand-point which *has been given*, and from which He will yet move the Universe. There we may stand

in all our weakness, and wait and watch to see Him work His wonders. And to what a climax of hope we climb, as word after word of this persuading promise sets our feet higher yet: "*How—shall He not—with Him—also—freely—give us—all things?*" How the strong arches stretch in succession over the whole wide stream of judgment! Or rather, we may behold it, as the one lithe span of a Sure Salvation, suspended over the chasm sundering earth and heaven, and let down on either side from the High Towers of a Father's and a Brother's love!

This sure word of promise, is no private title deed, but the broad charter of all who claim their citizenship in Heaven. *Every one*, who has received Christ at all as a Saviour, may go on to receive *with Him* all things. If any one admit the least flaw in this title to the *fulness* of Grace and Glory, he at the same time disallows it *all*, and must stand wholly disinherited. For with what consistency can he who claims not all, claim anything? "ALL THINGS"—"FOR US ALL"—for whom Christ died. Such is the substance of the Promise.

"All things, for us all." Such a saying should silence forever all the babbling of the faithless, who still insist, "These blessings are for a few, not for all—not for me." But God has graven it in the Rock forever, "ALL THINGS FOR US ALL." Venture, then, timid traveller, upon this sure promise of thy God.

Here, take thy stand upon the Rock, saying, "I

can do no other." Make this thy stepping-stone into the Land of Promise, and the power of Christ's Resurrection. Make this also thy sure foundation, and there uphold the glorious Covenant, in the eyes of all whose feet seem ready to fail for fear. Set it up as thy memorial, and keep it always in thy remembrance. And thou shalt never need to seek for any other stone upon which to write thy Eben-ezer; but with every coming day, thou canst still say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me," and so set to thy seal that God is true.

But to pass on to the fuller significance of this symbol. The word of God thus proven in experience, becomes embodied in the life of the Believer. Each faithful confessor of His Lord becomes a Rock, and is built up as a living stone, in that monument which witnesses to the power and wisdom of God—*His holy Church*. The Resurrection of Jesus was followed by the setting up of its foundations, and as it "groweth to an holy Temple," it is the truest trophy which He exhibits to the Universe. Christian Confession, Christian Character, Christian Conduct—these are the true memorials of a Risen Saviour. And as the stones at Gilgal renewed from age to age the question, "What mean ye by these stones?"—so will it always be that such a life will suggest the deepest searching into the ways of God. Very sweetly, in words that are daily endeared to the hearts of thousands, has this great need been shaped into the prayer, "We beseech thee,

give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we may show forth thy praise, *not only with our lips, but in our lives*; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness, all our days.”*

Meanwhile, there is one great memorial, that has already been set up, and that has stood strong throughout the ages—twelve goodly stones that have been marked with special honor—the Twelve Apostles of our Lord. Distributing to the many members of the one body their gifts and offices, “God hath set in the Church, *first, Apostles*.” Joined in a peculiarly close and sacred fellowship with the Chief Corner-stone, these twelve were to constitute the first solid round of foundation stones† which in all the future growth of the Holy Temple could never be repeated. The Building could only be fitly framed together, by every other stone being built *upon* the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets.‡

* Book of Common Prayer—General Thanksgiving of Morning and Evening Prayer.

† Rev. xxi. 14.

‡ “‘Ye are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone’ (Eph. ii. 20). The corner-stone is but part of the foundation, though it be the first and the chief part; and this consolidation of the corner-stone with the adjacent foundations, as one basement to sustain the building, exhibits in the plainest manner the fact, that the Church, *in respect of its faith*, rests upon a testimony which

Chosen to be witnesses of Christ's Resurrection, they are set up as soon as their Lord has passed over through death into life. The importance of their office may be somewhat measured from that long night of solitary prayer on the mountain-top, which preceded their call, as well as from all the solemn, sacred words and acts of their subsequent commission.

Were our Gospel given us only in the life of Jesus upon earth—had our New Testament closed with the record of the Evangelists—we should have had only that which "Jesus *began* both to do and teach." For its *completion* and its full preparation for the world, it was needful that it should be wrought out practically in merely human lives. It was fitting, also, that the number selected for the first exhibition of this new power, should be the same as that so often chosen by God as representing human instrumentality. Twelve is the multiple of that number which marks the Triune Being of God, and of that other which denotes earthly expansion, and completeness of human combination.* Thus both Divine and human factors are

was delivered partly by Jesus in person, and partly by the agents whom for that purpose He ordained. Their inspiration as believers associates them with the whole Church; their inspiration as teachers unites them only with their Lord."—*Bernard's Progress of Doctrine in the New Test.*, p. 125.

* See page 194-5 of Vol. I. of Bahr's "Symbolik des Mosaischen Cultus" (Heidelberg, 1874.) See also the Introduction to Lange's Com. on the Revelation of St. John.

seen in the number of Instruments, set apart by God, for working upon man, through man.

Thus then were the Twelve Apostles set forth as our examples—taken out of the common quarries of humanity, even out of its roughest regions—to show before the world, what forms of God-like manliness the great Sculptor could shape and polish.

And standing first as ensamples, they are also clothed with high authority. It was the safety of the earliest converts, that “they continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship.” It is still the safety of the Church, even for such as are “prophets” and “spiritual,” to acknowledge the things which they wrote unto us, as the commandments of the Lord.*

“What mean ye by these stones?” was the inquiry to be ever incited by the memorial at Gilgal. And a question like it still confronts the sceptic and the careless—What mean these Living Stones—these lives of Christ’s Apostles?

What mean from simple peasants and fishermen such dignity and grandeur?—out of a nation so narrow and so rigid, such breadth, such pliability?—What mean in men who have sheathed the sword, a zeal and courage that no warrior ever matched?—What mean from unlearned and ignorant men, those torrents of effective eloquence?—What mean—we will not ask the “signs and wonders, and mighty deeds,”

* 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

which men have mocked and mimicked—but that *Patience*, which is the foremost sign of an Apostle,* whereas no enchantment can ever “do in like manner?”—What can they mean save this, that Christ who died is risen again, and that these are the witnesses of His Resurrection, each of whom can say, “Christ liveth in me.”

It must not be overlooked that while these twelve stones upon the further shore constituted the great memorial, twelve other stones were set up in the midst of Jordan to mark the place where the Ark of the Covenant had gone down; and, says the historian, “There they are unto this day.”

For never, while giving testimony to “Jesus and the Resurrection,” must the deep valley of His death be forgotten. The Lord Himself has taught us how we should behold Him now, in those words that opened the Apocalypse, “I am the Living One and I BECAME DEAD.” “There they are unto this day”—the Agony—the Trial—the Cross—the Tomb! There it was that He stood so long for our sakes that He might bring us unto glory. Yea, even let Him remain, “a Lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the Throne!”

So, also, in that Memorial, which would be robbed of its chief blessing, were it not the communion of the soul with an ascended, glorified Lord, how clearly are we still pointed to the broken body, and the shed

* 2 Cor. xii. 12.

blood, and told, in tones that stir all our tenderest thoughts, "Do this *in remembrance of me.*"

It may be permissible to regard one more final lesson as suggested by this latter group of stones. Taken as they were from the Land of Promise itself, and carried back to the bed of the river, they may set forth the call of some of God's servants, to a special fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, for His service sake. The call of the Apostle Paul was thus marked,—"*I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*"

So he counted not his life dear unto himself, that he might fulfil his ministry; and thus he filled up "that which was behind of the sufferings of Christ," for the sake of His Church.

And so we may find indicated in these deep-sunk stones, what one of the most spiritual of the German divines has spoken of as, "the deep principle that to every vessel of grace, and especially every witness of the Gospel, suffering is inevitable; and that the measure of affliction is in proportion to the height and dignity of the vocation."* To all His disciples Christ gives His seven-fold Benediction;† but he has another beyond these,‡ wherewith to crown His Kings and Priests; that suffering for righteousness' sake, they might "rejoice and be exceeding glad."

* Rudolph Stier, "Words of the Risen Saviour," p. 36.

† Matt. v. 3-9.

‡ Matt. v. 10.

Ye whom God honors thus, be not moved by these afflictions. Let your hearts be comforted by the words of one, who knew full well of what he spoke, "Unto you *it is given* in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." "It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with Him we shall also live with Him; *if we suffer* WE SHALL ALSO REIGN WITH HIM."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REPROACH OF EGYPT.

“AND JOSHUA MADE HIM SHARP KNIVES AND CIRCUMCISED THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. AND THE LORD SAID UNTO JOSHUA, THIS DAY HAVE I ROLLED AWAY THE REPROACH OF EGYPT FROM OFF YOU.”—(*Josh.* v. 3, 9).

The first experience in the Land of Blessing was to be one of pain. As the people had needed a special preparation for passing over Jordan, so did the larger portion of them need a further preparation for the Conquest. Upon the other side the command of God had been, “Set yourselves apart.” The time had come to carry out their consecration. The covenant of circumcision was to be renewed. Through all the bondage of Egypt it appears to have been observed, and nothing marks more clearly the demoralization of the wilderness, than its utter neglect. “Now *all the people* that came out were circumcised; but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way, as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.”

The command seems very stern—"The Lord said unto Joshua, make thee sharp knives and circumcise again the children of Israel;" yet it marks the goodness rather than the severity of God. He was thus renewing for them a Covenant of Blessing.

The first consequence of this covenant had been the change of Abram's name to Abraham, as now to be the father of many nations. Ninety years old and nine when he was circumcised, he must suffer in his flesh, before the promised seed was given. God, who had called him out of his own country, that He might bless him, and make him a blessing,* who had appeared again as his shield and exceeding great reward, and counted his faith for righteousness,† now in this third call, summoned him to walk before Him, and to be perfect.‡ He had led him up step by step to this absolute devotion to Himself, and so finally gave to him this significant token of the covenant, which He made with him and his posterity. The penalty of disobedience or of neglect was this—"That soul shall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant."

It is often questioned how far these types could be comprehended by the people who observed them. But in regard to this one, it appears certain that its moral import was seen. We find all along the record of its outward observance, a contemporary spiritual

* Gen. xii. 1-3.

† Gen. xv. 1-5.

‡ Gen. xvii. 1-10.

use of the term. Even in the wilderness Moses called upon the people to "circumcise their hearts and be no more stiff-necked;" and even there was the promise given, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, *to love the Lord thy God* with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."*

And seeking for its significance to us, we find in perfect accord with the appeals of the Old Testament, the teaching of the New, that circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter. We are shown that its present correlatives are, "the keeping of the commandments of God," "faith working by love," and "a new creature." We are told that "We then are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh;" and that in our "circumcision made without hands," that which we have put off is "the body of the sins of the flesh."† As clearly as God commanded the shadow of things to come, when He made this special covenant with Abraham, so clearly did the Lord Jesus reënact its substance, when He turned and said unto His disciples, "If any man will come after me, *let him deny himself*, and take up his cross and follow me. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world,

* Deut. xxx. 6.

† See 1 Cor. vii. 19; Gal. v. 6 and vi. 15; Phil. iii. 3, and Col. ii. 11.

shall keep it unto life eternal." * The lesson of circumcision then, while including much beside, is fundamentally this—the putting away of selfism, so affecting a radical change of life, by substituting for the love of self in all its intricate ramifications, the singleness of love to God. The process changes the very polarity of our nature. In the world at large, "*all seek their own*, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." But the heart which the Lord has circumcised to love Him, "*seeketh not its own*."

It is somewhat startling at first, to find such a scene of suffering over Jordan, since it would seem to belong rather to the preparation. But the order in which it stands is certainly in accord with the developments of Christian life. In the Epistle to the Colossians, St. Paul writes, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God ; mortify, *therefore*, your members which are upon the earth." The first working of the power of Christ's resurrection is in the fellowship of His sufferings—His love of necessity constraining us to die unto sin and self, and live unto Him. Only as we take our share in His life and in His love, can this be possible ; for there can be no such thing in Christian experience as the mere negative abstinence from evil. Only a living and loving soul that has taken firm hold of the promises of God, can cleanse itself "from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit." No one would ever dream of attempt-

* Matt. xvi. 24, and John xii. 25.

ing to remove the darkness from a room, without letting in the light. And as the entering of the light removes the darkness, so must the Spirit come to banish self.

Let no one be dismayed in the first joy of this resurrection life, at finding that a painful process awaits him, and that all is not even yet left behind. But neither let him think that there can be any further progress, until his consecration has become a solemn covenant, sealed by sacrifice. He must neither despair at the discovery of self, nor fail to let it be crucified.

Again, let none think that we are able to do this for ourselves. Jesus, our Joshua, is the only one who can cause His love so to constrain the soul, as to remove all "superfluity of naughtiness." And the sharp knife which He will use is His own Word, which is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

It is of the utmost importance for us to understand that whatever of self still exists in us, it can by no possibility be hidden from God. It is naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. As clearly as Jesus read the hearts of those around Him when on earth, thus answering their

thoughts rather than their words, so clearly does He comprehend every undercurrent, and subtle depth in our being now. We may be self-deceived, but we can never deceive the Lord.

And very rarely are they deceived who walk in His light. When to that native intuition which often reaches far below the surface, there is added any power of discerning spirits, the true standing of those with whom they mingle is almost sure to be known—whether self be living or slain. How foolish, therefore, not to say how sinful, to evade that knowledge of ourselves which others have.

Christians are usually ready to make any amount of *general* confession of sin; they recognize and lament the taint that is found everywhere *in humanity*. They can judge their own sin *in the abstract*; but not always—not often—are they ready to humble themselves, and receive the message, “*Thou art the man.*” The Physician rarely finds his patient offended by a simple statement of his disease, but how few who, in the sickness of their souls, seek for spiritual counsel, are willing to be told the truth. Thoroughly aware of *some* difficulty, they think themselves ready for any sacrifice—for the removal of any hindrance. And it is no difficult task for one accustomed to deal with souls, to detect that special form of self which is their snare. But if it be simply and honestly stated, offence is taken; it is denied or evaded; while the soul,

to shelter its wounded pride, affects discouragement at such misunderstanding, and so, by its own wilfulness, sinks into a worse condition than before.

What wonder if even true and faithful friends, foreseeing this, hesitate to perform an office which will not be accepted. It is a fearful thing when self has grown so strong, that in its pride it ceases to welcome the truth. What if God also should be unwilling to *force* it upon those who so little desire it! What if His only way to bring us to the knowledge of all that is in our heart, should be to leave us, that the sin which lies hidden in the depth of the heart, might work itself out in some bitter humiliation!

It is perfectly certain that while self thus remains alive, there are many of the very richest blessings, which God can not possibly impart, save at the risk of most imminent peril to the receiver. They would be perverted at once, to minister to the life of self. This is the most common cause of those delays, which so many experience in receiving that which they have asked—*Self is not slain*. Some instances of this kind may be very perplexing, since such secret selfishness may coexist with much zeal and outward fidelity, and many striking traits of Christian character. Especially may it coexist with the stronger elements. The strong man is lifted up because of his strength; and his heart must needs be changed to that of a little child, before he can grow again in knowledge and in grace. Whoever stands self-sufficient, even in God-given wis-

dom and strength, has lost the power of receiving more. He has to learn that *men never grow*—that only *the child grows*. When he is ready, even as a little babe, to desire the sincere milk of the word, then will God restore this privilege of growth.

On the other hand, there are instances of those who pass into the inner courts, to behold the nearer glory of God, with an ease that is equally perplexing to the superficial eye. Their lives are not at the time purer, and in almost every respect they may exhibit less of strength, than those whom they outstrip. But they have one all-important prerequisite, *simplicity of heart*. "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" said Jesus; and "the Jew inwardly," whose "circumcision is that of the heart," is thus ever recognized by the Lord, and receives praise of Him.

The least portion of that guile which is even more deceived than deceiving, is an evil root in the soil, which proves the most difficult of all things to eradicate. It can live upon so little. It can die apparently so often, and yet revive. But until self is really removed, and we come down below all pretence and conceit to solid ground—to a basis of entire truthfulness toward God—how impossible to be solidly built up. As well might one venture a tower above a quicksand!

Never has a truth of God been so travestied as this of *denying self*, in that which passes usually under the name of *self-denial*—the giving up of the most that

we may keep the dearest; the denial of *somewhat* to ourselves instead of the denial of *the whole self* to God. We may let a thousand things go out of our life and die, but our *life* has not died. The world may have been crucified unto us, but not we unto the world. We may possibly have parted with our right hand, or our right eye, but still, "skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life"—a fact well known to Satan who said it. "Living in anything unto ourselves, *even in the best things*, is the essential of self. When self is dead, its own heart ceases to beat; and every pulse of the new life, united unto Christ, keeps time with the throbbing of His own heart. The new heart which He has given, finds again the life which was lost for His sake, risen and glorified. It truly lives when it lives unto God.

What shall be said of this great need of Christians, and of the thousands in whom self is still alive? How shall, indeed, any intimation of their need be given them? How rend the veil of good works, and gifts, and graces, which drape and beautify this secret shrine of self? But for so much that is excellent, one might come sooner to the knowledge of the evil. In the lives of not a few, there are two currents; and we need thoroughly to understand that the under-current is the dangerous one. The eye that judges by the surface is not deceived—that current is real and regular; but as you enter the waters, you are swept along,

helpless, by the fitful force below. In all partially subdued natures, there will be found more or less of the contrary of their chief characteristics. Are they humble in converse and manner?—A secret pride or vanity finds a rich feeding-place beneath that humility, and some sudden outburst of jealousy or envy will betray it. Are they energetic, and full of stir and activity?—Somewhere an unwelcome duty will be turned into a couch of luxurious ease. Is the whole bearing that of perfect candor and frankness?—The occasion will come when insincerity will cloak itself with these, and pass unchallenged in its disguise. Is the life rich in its nobility and its generous deeds?—Below this good graft will spring up offshoots of timidity and petty meanness, to surprise some one long wonted to the sweeter fruits, with the crabbed taste of these. Every close observer of unbalanced Christian character, is prepared to find the faults in this marked contrast to the virtues, so that whatever may be *the general grain of the growth*, a sudden *knot* breaks through at the sharpest possible angle. It has been often noticed that the points on which many break down, are their *strong* points. Even in what seems the most assured to us, we have thus to “have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead.”

Such are some of the subtleties of self, which only the most piercing Eye can fully see, and only the

Hand, that is infinitely tender, as well as true, remove.

But there are other more prominent and shameful forms of self, which prevail throughout the Churches. Among these, we may number that worldliness which is everywhere rampant; the sensuality, or more refined sensuousness, which are asking, "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?"—ambition and covetousness, which have never yet been exorcised, and which find their way into highest and holiest places; that conformity to custom, which is accepted as such a matter of course, that little room is left for asking, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"—but their name is legion! Sad as is the statement, such is beyond all question the prevalent state of Christians.—*Uncircumcised in heart*—the self-denial which we witness, being too often either special and spasmodic on the one hand, or on the other, so ascetic as only to minister to spiritual pride.

Such is the reproach of Egypt which God summons us to roll away—the merited reproach that the old and evil nature is still visible, and that Christians are, after all, very much like others. Even amongst themselves, how utterly incomplete is the confidence which they can place in one another. Notwithstanding all that is lovely and of good report, how constant is the reproach.

In one of the Messianic psalms, we find a cry that

only falls short, in its sorrow, of the “*lama sabacthani*” of the Cross, “Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear *in my bosom* the reproach of all the mighty people; wherewith Thine enemies have reproached, O Lord, wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of Thine anointed.” *
 Alas! that it should be His *own anointed*—that such should be the stains upon hearts and lives sprinkled by the blood of Christ, and consecrated by the holy oil of the Spirit. God chose His people to be to Him for a name and an honor, and behold the reproach; He called them to be holy, and behold the corruption.

Of old the nationality of Israel was to be kept perfectly distinct. Yet it was not to be a nationality solely of birthright and of blood, for the circumcised stranger was to be as one born in the land. So, then, the physiognomy did not furnish the proof. The real token by which they were known as the people of God, was not that which is most obvious, but that which is most hidden. And yet this secret separation to God, compelled in various ways a separation from others, that would always mark them openly. The line was drawn with unmistakable clearness.

And though it be also with us “in the hidden man of the heart” that God puts His seal—still if it be there, by many another sign the world will know it, and we shall be separate from the world. When God

* Ps. lxxxix. 50, 51

calls upon us to circumcise our hearts, it practically involves this also—"Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing."

The Jew has always been known as such at once. But can we as easily discern the Christian? Here and there, "the ointment of the right hand bewrayeth itself." But how many who have professed to follow Christ, make themselves almost indistinguishable from a world that rejects Him? No attempt at a merely external separation avails. Such was not that of Christ. He even shocked the social standard of those who were for making a fair show in the flesh; and they said of Him—"This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." But all the more for this was He "holy, harmless, undefiled—*separate from sinners.*"

When the Israelites hastened to pass over Jordan, their first thoughts as they looked on to Jericho, must have been of immediate battle, and of drawing the sword upon their enemies. Instead of this, God gave them days of delay, and drew the sharp knife upon *them*. Gilgal was their first encampment in Canaan, and there, where they had set up their monument to the mercies of God, and then presented their bodies as living sacrifices, was their standard to remain. Gilgal appears to have continued to be their base throughout the long war that followed. There must have been a moral power in every return to that spot, where they had first rolled together the

memorial-stones—and then let God roll away their own reproach. He was their God, for He had done wondrous things for them ; and they were His people, for they had given themselves to Him. From Gilgal they could go forth again and again to conquer and possess the land.

Have we our Gilgal?—Why, then, is it that so much of our service and warfare is uncrowned with success and victory? Alas! the house in which self has any dominion is a house divided against itself, and can not stand. And the Church so constituted, is a host with variance and rebellion in its midst—weak at the best, and often in the very thick of the battle betrayed unto its enemies. If the Church of Christ would follow her Lord, as He goes forth “conquering and to conquer,” let her be truly consecrated and circumcised. If the Christian in the daily conflicts of life, would first learn to “die daily,” there would never an enemy stand before him. But let him cease to wonder that he does not come off victorious, if he is saving his life from such a death.

And yet it must needs be always a severe experience for those who have been living at ease, and as they have tried to think in all good conscience ; very hard for those who have been held in high honor by their fellow-men ; and sharpest of all to those who have become half-spoiled by facile flattery, or their own fatal self-fondling ;—upon whose ears little but praise has ever fallen. The sharp knife of God as it

touches these, will seem terrible in its truthfulness. They will almost demand that God should accept the award that has so satisfied themselves; and so struggling against His purpose, they prolong their sufferings. Would that they only knew how tender and how true is the Hand that wounds them! Then they would neither fear nor flinch!

For when we turn from the negative character of this symbol to the more positive form of the spiritual truth, we find that this sharp knife is, after all, only the pruning of the Husbandman, that the old decaying shoot may give place to a new one full of vigor and fruitfulness. It means not a maimed existence, but life more abundantly. It means not poverty, but wealth. It means not anger, but intensest love. It means that the one deadly element eliminated, God can then, without any reserve, flood us with every good thing. Self is often the only evil in many a pursuit and plan. That self once surrendered, they may be restored to us in all their richness to use and to enjoy for the glory of God, and to our own honor -- an honor that cometh from Him. And yet even here must a signal of danger be held up. While he that loseth his life shall find it, it is not when we lose it *that we may find it*, but when we lose it *for His sake*.

It is our own Gospel, then, that we read in those ancient words, "The Lord thy God will bring thee into the land, . . . and the Lord thy God will circum-

cise thine heart . . . to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, *that thou mayest live.*" *

Life is another thing when once a great love has entered it. Who has not known how Love turned pain to pleasure, and made sacrifices sweet? Love never talks of crosses and of losses.—It calls its losses gains, and its crosses crowns. *For my sake*, makes even death a delight. When we so love the Lord with all the heart, then to follow Him fully is our own choice. There comes an end to all mere theoretical consecration, in which we recognize solemnly the claims of God, and pass on our own way. There comes an end, also, to all testing of ourselves by suppositions of future claims. But another work begins—the constant cultivation of the conscience to *see* those claims. It is a little thing for Love to respond to an uttered wish.—It studies and anticipates the pleasure of the Beloved. The loving heart escapes a thousand difficulties which others meet, and a truly devoted life is not often puzzled by details of duty. Such perplexities are often the simple result of a discordant will, seeking at once to please itself, and avoid displeasing God. The soul that so loves, walks in holy law, but moves in perfect freedom. When the Lord has enlarged the heart, then it "*runs*" in the way of His commandments.

* Deut. xxx. 5, 6.

- “ Love hath taught me to obey
All His precepts, and to say,
Not to-morrow, but to-day !
- “ What He wills, I say I must ;
What I must, I say I will ;
He commanding, it is just.
What He would, I should fulfil :
Whilst He biddeth, I believe ;
What He calls for, He will give :
To obey Him is to live.
- “ His commandments grievous are not,
Longer than men think them so ;
Though He send me forth, I care not,
Whilst He gives me strength to go,
When or whither, all is one.
On His business, not my own,
I shall never go alone.
- “ If I be complete in Him,
And in Him all fulness dwelleth,
I am sure aloft to swim,
Whilst that Ocean overswelleth ;
Having Him that's all in all,
I am confident I shall
Nothing want for which I call.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE PASSOVER IN CANAAN.

“THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL ENCAMPED IN GILGAL, AND KEPT THE PASSOVER ON THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH AT EVEN, IN THE PLAINS OF JERICHO.”—(*Josh.* v. 10).

The event which we find following next in order, stood in a very significant relation to the preceding rite. As we have seen that circumcision symbolized *the loss of self*, so we find that in the Passover Feast, the lesson taught is one of greatest gain—even *the gain of Christ as OUR LIFE*.

It was a part of God's gracious providence to bring the people over Jordan in time to be rightly prepared for the Feast; for the law was stringent—“No uncircumcised person shall eat thereof;”^{*} for let it be again repeated, there can be no building up of an impure life; no true communion with God, while in the bonds of self.

And as the Passover thus depended upon another rite, so were there still further privileges depending upon this. This Feast was to precede their enjoy-

^{*} Ex. xii. 48.

ment of the fruit of the land, of which they were not permitted to eat until the following day. Having crossed upon the tenth of the month Nisan, they kept the Passover upon its appointed day, the fourteenth: "and they did eat of the new corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover."*. It is added that "the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the new corn."† Its continuance for nearly a week in a land of plenty, is a circumstance so extraordinary, as to indicate at once some spiritual lesson. Indeed, the necessity for it must have ceased long before, upon entering the fertile region east of Jordan. But still it fell for their daily food, until the slain Lamb and unleavened Bread should rightly introduce them to the fulness and fatness of the Land. First the Passover, and then the new corn and the ripe fruit. First Christ, and then with Him, "all things."

Though forty years had passed since that night in Egypt which was so much to be remembered, this was but the third Passover. The first they had eaten in haste, girded for their journey. The second was observed a year from that time, upon the setting up of the Tabernacle at Mt. Sinai. After that the neglect of circumcision and their whole abnormal condition in the Wandering, would render the Feast both inappropriate and impossible. No hint of any such observance appears upon the sacred page.

* Josh. v. 11. See p. 200.

† Josh. v. 12.

It is very striking that this first service after entering Canaan, in which all the people participated, was the same as that which had signalized their departure from Egypt. That first deliverance had alone made their present blessings possible. Therefore it had been said unto them, "Ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever. . . . And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses."*

When the Lord smote in judgment all the first-born of Egypt, but for the sprinkled blood of the Lamb, they had all likewise perished. But for the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, none of us had ever escaped from the just judgment to be executed against sin. It was life from the very jaws of death that was given us. And so, as we celebrate the mercies of our God, we can not stop short of this, that "Jesus delivered us from the wrath to come." Nothing so prepares us for advancing blessing as our return to this truth; and by every good thing that is given us, does this become ever more precious. No other thought can so humble us, and none other can so lift us up in holy hope.

This Passover in Canaan, however, differed widely

* Ex. xii. 24-27.

in its mode of observance from the first in Egypt. Indeed, the whole subsequent character of the Feast is one of the most striking instances occurring under the Law, of the spirit of a command being so developed as to almost outgrow its letter. The Lamb and the Unleavened Bread indeed remained. But glancing over the *details* of its institution, we see at once that the minute directions given were mainly adapted to their peculiar position at the time, and if perpetuated at all, could only become mere forms. Yet we find in the Scriptures no record of any permission to vary its observance, and only slight and scattered statements of the changes themselves. But from unquestionable historic sources, we learn how many and how marked were the modifications introduced, and to all appearance divinely sanctioned. Indeed the great truth embodied in this service, was too vital to be cumbered with unyielding forms, and for its very protection was allowed a power of free adaptation. All that was truly essential in it was thus strengthened, rather than weakened.

Had the Church of Christ in past ages only pondered this precedent more fully, what cruel contests over the mere modes of her Christian ordinances, might she have been spared. And were it even now more pondered, what bitter bigotry might be abated. No charge concerning any ordinance, can surely ever compete with words like these—"This is my com-

mandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you !”

As the service was first observed, the two things to be made prominent were these—protection from death, and departure from Egypt. But once safe in the Land, there followed an expansion of its meaning, requiring to be duly marked. No longer needing to be eaten in haste, it became a prolonged and restful service. No longer looking to the future, but to the past, and what God had wrought, it was fitting to intermingle it with song after song of praise. How precious from such continuous use are those six Psalms,* which end with one more precious than all, because sung by Jesus, before He went forth to suffer. How must the holy Hymn have swelled upon His lips, as He sang—“ I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord ”—“ God is the Lord which hath showed us light ; bind the sacrifice with cords even unto the horns of the altar.”†

But by far the most striking change was the introduction of the wine, of which the very poorest in the land was to drink at least four cups, in the course of

* Pss. cxiii.-cxviii.—These Psalms, called the Egyptian Hallel, or the great Hallel, were appointed to be sung eighteen times in the year. “ On the feast of the Passover, the hallel was so divided, that Pss. cxiii. and cxiv. were sung before the meal, before taking the second festal cup ; Pss. cxv.-cxviii., after the meal, after filling the fourth cup.”—*Dr. Moll's Introduction to the Psalms, Lange's Com.*, p. 13.

† Ps. cxviii. 17, 27.

the meal.* The blood which at first was sprinkled upon their doors, was subsequently poured out at the altar by the Priest; but that it might not fail of its commemoration at the feast, wine, the symbol of social joy, was permitted to represent it; thus fitly marking the advance from protection without, to life and joy within. And thus was made ready in its completeness, the symbol which the Lord Jesus used when He took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."†

In tracing this chief Feast of the old Covenant, on to this "new testament," and viewing it as there fulfilled, we find not mere instruction, but truth of the most vital kind. As in so many previous lessons, it is still Jesus and the Resurrection that are here proclaimed; but now in an entirely new aspect. We saw in Jordan, a symbol of Christ's death, *through* which we rise into His life. In the Land of Promise we saw a symbol of His fulness, *into* which we rise. But in the Passover, we begin to see how it is that *He rises in us*. The Lord Jesus is that corn of wheat that having fallen into the ground and died, is here seen springing up again, no more "abiding alone,"

* "There is no mention of wine in connection with the Passover in the Pentateuch; but the Mishna strictly enjoins that there should never be less than four cups of it provided, at the paschal meal, even of the poorest Israelite."—*Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*.

† Luke xxii. 20.

but "bringing forth much fruit" in all those many lives that make up the Church as His Body.

We enter here upon holy ground—upon one of the profoundest mysteries of the Gospel, which even as taught by the Lord Jesus, gave rise to misunderstanding, and offence, and the turning back of many; but which is all the more precious to those who know that He "has the words of eternal life."

While it is impossible to separate this subject from that of the Lord's Supper, it is most needful to draw one clear line of distinction. "The spiritual verity which underlies the ordinance" is not indissolubly connected with it. The Passover was by no means the symbol of another symbol, but of a great Reality. Gliding as one ordinance did into the other, it was the same truth which, taught first in the ceremony of the Law, was to find its highest and richest *expression* in the Church's celebration. For closely as it pleased the Lord to connect the substance and the symbol, He has not *limited* the one by the other. The same wisdom that appointed an outward form for the spiritual truth, that we might have every help, provided against any possible hindrance, by giving that truth a life that was *dependent* upon no form.

The safeguard against any such confounding of things that differ, is set very clearly in the Scriptures. St. John in his Gospel gives us the *inner aspect* of this truth, as taught by Christ in His wonderful words about His flesh and blood, and then is utterly

silent respecting the institution of the Supper,—leaving the other Evangelists to give the corresponding outward aspect. Precisely as elsewhere, it is the New Birth which He presents, and not the corresponding rite of Baptism. It is the more needful to draw this distinction, since there is great reason to fear, that not a few Christians have been robbed of one of the most precious presentations of Truth, by falsely connecting it with Sacramentarianism. On the other hand, it seems not a little singular that profoundly spiritual as is this truth, the cry of Materialism has been so often raised against it. Plainly in the case of the Jews, who first charged Christ with such a meaning, it was *their own materialism* which led to their utter misapprehension of that which could only be *spiritually* discerned.

The significance of the Passover (and much more the Lord's Supper) can not possibly be stinted to a *memorial* service. Some *present* participation is very plainly implied, while the starting-point is that of a grateful remembrance. "It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations." But if the observance of this service forever, was simply to keep the past in remembrance, there was no significance in its chief symbol. With the blood upon their doors, they ate of the Passover Lamb. Even in Egypt, they were shown at once,

that there was to be an inward appropriation of their sacrifice. That which had saved from death, was also to impart to them life and strength; and as already stated, this idea would be still further developed upon the subsequent introduction of the wine. So likewise in the Supper, the remembrance is made the basis of other blessings, as it also furnishes the chief ground of obligation—"This do *in remembrance* of me." First of all, the Lord would have us turn our eyes to the broken body, and the shed blood. Not even in heaven are we to cease from this remembrance; for there indeed we shall come still more clearly to the recognition of His death. In the midst of the Throne we shall see "a Lamb as it had been *slain*;" and the new song of heaven will open with the dear familiar words of many an old song on earth,—"*Thou wast slain*, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood;" while the chorus of ten thousand times ten thousand will repeat it,—"**WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN.**"*

But remembrance is not to be repetition. We are to recall the great salvation, rather than to reclaim it, and thus to reassure our hearts before God. Christ has no need to offer Himself often, since He has offered one sacrifice for sins forever; and they whose sins and iniquities He remembers no more, can have now no more conscience of those sins, the *one remission* of which is as sure as the *one offering*.† Only

* Rev. v. 6-12.

† Heb. x. 18.

once do we keep our Passover in Egypt, with the blood sprinkled upon our doors. There was never indeed but one *Passover*; and after that it was the *Feast* of the Passover.

What then is our present privilege in this remembrance—our participation of Christ? Is it real, or only ideal? Is the cup a testimony, or a Testament? And if He indeed gives aught, or we receive aught, what is it, and in what manner is it given and received? The Scriptures make answer, that Christ our Passover gives us *Himself*—that is, He gives His entire being—gives us *His Spirit*, and gives us also, "*His flesh and His blood.*"

But here we find ourselves touching upon other truths, which must be accepted as preliminary to this, and to which the Scriptures give no uncertain testimony. First among these is the new relation, established by Christ, between matter and spirit, which is the very significance of the Incarnation. "THE WORD was made FLESH." Next, but closely linked with this, is the glorification of Christ's human body; and then as the result of this, the final glorifying of our own. These are not speculations, else were the Scriptures silent respecting them; and the reasoning which recoils from them, ends consistently in the refusal to confess, that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, in any true sense. Indeed it is to be seriously questioned if the doctrine of the Incarnation itself be

generally and fully received in our day—if many have not drifted into a sort of Gnosticism, with its dualism, and docetism.

When the chasm between the Divine and human was to be filled, the first step in the great mystery, whose completion was to be “Christ in you, the hope of glory,” was this — “Who was manifested in the flesh.” Coming into the world He saith—“A body hast Thou prepared me.” That body, formed by the overshadowing of the Highest, was a holy thing, and therefore having in it “the power of an endless life.” It had no need for itself to pay by death the wages of sin. No man took that life from Jesus—*He laid it down of Himself*—laid it down that He might take it again.* Yet it was not possible for Him to be holden of the bands of death, nor did God suffer His Holy One to see corruption. The Scriptures put this point beyond all dispute, by repeated assertions.† “He whom God raised again saw *no* corruption”—“Neither did His *flesh* see corruption;” and *the precious blood* of Christ is especially declared not to be a corruptible thing.‡ The resurrection from the dead declared Him to be the Son of God with power, “*according to the Spirit of holiness.*” It was a Body still, with flesh and bones, that might be seen and handled,

* John x. 17, 18.

† Cf. Acts ii. 27–31 and xiii. 34–37.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

and yet moving with all the freedom of a Spirit—"showing Himself alive by many infallible proofs."*

Had there been no deeper meaning in the Resurrection than an *evidence*, the manifestation in the flesh might have ended here, and the body have been put away, when He ascended up where He was before. But the blessed mystery goes further—"Was received up into glory." Into what glory let the "Light from heaven at midday, above the brightness of the sun," that blinded Saul of Tarsus, while it answered, "I am Jesus," tell us; even as the Face, that had once already "shone as the sun," had given token. It

* "The glorified body of Christ was not altered as regards its fundamental components; it was *the same body*, with the marks of the nails and the wound in its side, but in a new *spiritual form of existence*, and therefore standing *under other laws*. It therefore appears until the ascension, when its transformation was completed—as an elementary, earthly, material body; but its elements are no longer bound by space, and it can go here or there, make itself visible or invisible—in fact, shape itself outwardly according to the internal will. And this is possible, because the body is *spiritualized through and through*; it has become an adequate expression of the spirit and its willing instrument. The body no longer opposes its own laws (of space, gravitation, motion, etc.,) to the volitions of the spirit; it does not hinder nor limit them, but implicitly obeys. All strife is at an end. If the spirit will to transport itself to any place, it can do so together with the body; the body no longer hinders it, for it is saturated with vital force and immortality. This is what the Scriptures (1 Cor. xv. 44-46) call a spiritual body (σῶμα πνευματικόν), in contradistinction to the "natural body" (ψυχικόν).—*Christlieb's Modern Doubt and Christian Belief*, pp. 475-6, (Am. Ed.)

was evidently the whole being of the Lord, in that triple division which the Scripture sanctions—of spirit, soul, and body—that rose from the dead, ascended, and was glorified. But this last Adam being “a quickening Spirit,” is the great Fountain-Head of all renewed being. Being glorified, He shed forth His Holy Spirit, that He might quicken first our spirits, and then our mortal bodies also. As it was *His* whole being that was glorified, so is it plainly *our* whole being that is to be glorified together with Him*—even as it is our “whole spirit and soul and body,” which are to be “preserved blameless unto His coming.”

And now we advance to the great revelation, that this work is not only wrought *by* Him, but through His “*giving us Himself as the Bread of Life.*” He has taught us that there in His glorified Being a blessed power of imparting itself, in a real communication of both spiritual and bodily life. We surely can not keep the Feast—Christ our Passover sacrificed for us—with any spiritual intelligence, unless we receive in simple faith, those wonderful words in which He has taught us—“He that *cateth Me, even He shall live by me.*”† The many words which the Lord Jesus used in that most memorable discourse, are not so much restatements, as constant advances, in the unfolding of the truth.

First of all He taught—“I am that Bread of life.”

* Cf. Romans viii. 17 and 23.

† John vi. 57.

They who had eaten the manna, died;—for the manna had no life—but this was *living* Bread; and he who should eat, should live forever. Not only should *have now* everlasting life, in his renewed spirit, but Jesus would also raise him up, in body, at the *last day*.*

“*I am that Bread of life.*” It is to His own *Person*, that Jesus draws our eyes in His promise, “that every one which seeth the Son, and *believeth on Him*,” shall have everlasting life, *and* be raised up again at the last day.

But He had further truth to teach. It was not only of His giving us His Spirit that He spoke, but “the Bread that I will give is *my flesh*, which I will give for the life of the world.”† A hard saying indeed to

* “The natural import of the phrase ‘last day’ restricts this necessarily to the bodily resurrection. Every application of the expression to the merely spiritual ministry of Christ would make it a mere repetition of the ‘eternal life.’”—*Olshausen on John* vi. 40.

† See Dean Alford’s Greek Testament, for a deeply interesting note on John vi. 51, in which he “at once rejects all metaphorical and side-interpretations, as, that the *teaching* of Christ is the Bread, and to be *taught by Him* is feeding upon it (so Grotius and the modern rationalists): that the *divine Nature of Christ*, or His *sending of the Holy Spirit*, or His *whole life of doing good* on earth, can be meant: all such have against them the plain sense of the words, which, as Stier observes, are *very simple ordinary words*. . . . His Flesh is the glorified substance of His Resurrection Body, now at the right hand of God He has given His flesh for the life of the world (τοῦ κόσμου). *The very existence of all the created world* is owing to, and held together by that Resurrection Body of the Lord.”

listen to—but what if they should see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? * What if He proved that His sacred flesh was worthy of the presence of God, and subject to no earthly conditions? It was then His flesh, *in its resurrection glory*, of which He spoke, when the Body once broken should become living, life-giving Bread.

But He had still another gift—*His blood*—of which He next began to speak. “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. . . . He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.” †

* “The Lord signifies and promises here a *future removal of the offence*, a subsequent better knowledge, when His present earthly manifestation should be finally withdrawn just as in Ch. viii. 28. . . . *Then will it be disclosed to you that, and in what way My human corporeity, become heavenly and glorified, may be given to be eaten and to be drunk.*”—“Stier’s Words of the Lord Jesus,” Vol V., pp. 210–211.

† John vi. 53–56. Jesus represents Himself as the quickener of the whole man, the spiritual quickening prevailing up to ver. 50, while from v. 51 the idea which lies at the foundation of the Holy Supper—that the glorified corporeity of Christ sanctifies and glorifies ours also—comes out in stronger relief. . . . With the eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of the Son of Man, are connected everlasting life, abiding in Christ, and living forever, *i. e.*, the sublimest effects which the Redeemer proposed in general to call forth. . . . The life and being of Christ is an all-penetrating, sanctifying, and glorifying power; the union of man with it in all three departments of his being is internal, real, essential.”—*Oishausen’s Biblical Com.*, Vol. II., p. 418. See also, the same, for the view of the early Fathers, and also Luther’s, concerning the germ of the resurrection body.

We enter here a path which, however unfamiliar to modern thought, discloses to the spiritual eye a glorious vista up to the very treasure-house of Truth—a path where Saint and Scholar have walked side by side, with reverent tread—where we meet in their holy meditations, such men as Chrysostom, and Calvin, and Bengel, and Stier.* What a distance from their apostolic “faith in His blood” to that reasoning which sees in it at best a figure.†

The blood of beasts, shed for so many years, whatever the value *assigned* it for an atonement under the Old Covenant, was but a figure. Not so when Jesus said—“This is *My* blood of the New Testament.” “The blood of the everlasting Covenant” was a true thing. As has been said, “*the unintelligent horror of the blood*,” which unbelief in the truth of God

* While referring freely in these notes to Scholars who have taken the view here presented, I feel bound to add that my own convictions were formed solely from the study of the Word. It was not merely a surprise, but *an astonishment* to meet with such confirmation. Most heartily can I re-echo the words of the saintly Bengel, “I shall indeed rejoice if by means of the things which I have stated, any occasion will be afforded for increasing the love and knowledge of our Redeemer, who has paid the price of His blood for us.”

† “The *proper* consideration of Christ’s blood is sparingly introduced, and many have straightway recourse to a *figure*, whereby they understand under this word, blood, either the whole merit of Christ, or His life, *i. e.*, the living principle, or soul.”—See Bengel’s Gnomon, Vol. IV., Clark’s Ed., where he devotes fifteen pages (474–488) to a subject on which he once meditated a Treatise.

in the Old Testament has created, is here done away in the centre of the Christian worship, in this most precious bond of love between Christ and His own."*

As has been already seen, we need here to keep steadily in view the glorification of the entire being of Jesus. The blood was no unimportant part of that being—for "the life of the flesh is in the blood."† Besides, be it repeated, we are told in express words, that we were "not redeemed with *corruptible* things, but with *the precious blood of Christ*"‡—confirming the truth, that He whom God raised up saw *no* corruption. Why then should the faith that follows the ascending body of Jesus into Heaven, falter when it learns that the blood had its own entrance also? In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we are told how the High Priest, once every year, entered into the holiest, not without blood; and then how Christ having come, entered in once into the Holy Place, *by His own blood*. § This was "the better sacrifice" that purified

* Stier.

† Lev. xvii. 11.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

§ Heb. ix. 12. "Christ entered into the sanctuary *by His own blood*; not merely *after* the blood was shed, and *by the force* of its being shed, nor *with* the blood taken back into the body, but *BY* the blood: therefore, this Priest Himself carried into the sanctuary His own blood, separately from his body.' . . . , (Chrysostom Hom. 33, on Heb. xiii.): The actual economy of the suffering was without, I say without; but the blood was carried up INTO heaven. You observe that we are partakers of the blood that was carried into the Sanctuary—the true Sanctuary—the blood of the Sacrifice in which He alone, the High Priest delighted."—*Bengel's Gnomon*, p. 476-7.—In the same passage

“the heavenly things themselves.” This was “*the blood of His cross*” with which He made peace. Our own confidence to enter into the Holiest, we are further told, is in that blood.* Nor need it surprise us when we are warned a little further on, of the sore punishment of which they are worthy, who “count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.”†

As has been said by Bengel,‡ “The blood itself shed, not the shedding of the blood, is the *ransom*, the *price of eternal redemption*. That price paid to God, remains paid, without being restored to the body of the Redeemer. The redemption is eternal; the value of the price is eternal, just as if the Redeemer hung on the cross daily, and expired daily for us. In His death there was *the power of a life that was not to be dissolved*. In His life there is *the value of His death, which is perpetual*.”

One can but note the care with which distinct mention is made by the Lord Jesus, of His flesh, and of His blood; as afterwards at the last Supper, He gave the separate emblems—the bread, of His body, and the wine, of His blood. Thus they are also mentioned by St. Paul.§ So once more in Hebrews, where we are told of the realities of heaven, to

Bengel also quotes from Calvin, as saying, “Christ carried His own blood INTO the heavenly Sanctuary to make atonement for the sins of the world.”

* Heb. x. 19.

† Heb. x. 29.

‡ Gnomon, Vol. IV., p. 479.

§ 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.

which we have now come—after the mention of “innumerable angels,” of “the festive assembly and Church of the First-born,” and “God the Judge of all,” and “the Spirits of just men made perfect,” there are also added—“Jesus the Mediator” of the new Covenant, AND *the blood of sprinkling* “that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”*

But to follow the teaching of Jesus to its close. He tells us plainly, that He is not using words as figures, but as names of real things. “My flesh is *true* meat—My blood is *true* drink.”† And it is now no longer upon His *giving* this food for the life of the world that He dwells; but upon *our eating and drinking*, which are repeated again and again. The giving was His one act—the receiving our constantly renewed act. And now at last, after Jesus had for the first time foretold His Ascension, He explains, that it was not mere flesh of which He had been speaking—not the carnal thing that was in their thoughts—“the flesh profiteth nothing”—but of “the Spirit that quickeneth”—(words which the

* Heb. xii. 24.

† “John vi. 55, *αληθής* is not *ἡ ἀληθινή*, nor is the sense, ‘My flesh is the true meat,’ etc., but *My flesh is true meat*, i. e., really to be eaten, which they doubted. Thus *ἀληθώς* is a gloss which falls short of the depth of the adjective. This verse is decisive against all explaining away, or metaphorizing the passage. Food and drink are not here mere metaphors;—rather are our common material food and drink mere shadows and imperfect types of this only real reception of refreshment and nourishment into the being.”—*Dean Alford's Greek Testament*, Vol. I. p., 718.

Apostle Peter must have had in mind, when he spoke of Christ as being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit). And then all is summed up in the pregnant saying—"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." What words?—unless chiefly those upon which He had rested such a weight—the words so often repeated—"My flesh—My blood!" These should prove "true meat, true drink," because also, when He had ascended, "Spirit, and Life."* Recalling no word that He had said already, He only rescued His pearls from the swine, who were trampling them under their feet. And still some believed not. How indeed should they? It was hard to receive His witness when He only told of earthly things. That a living man could be born again—born from above—by being born of water and of the Spirit, was a strange thing to their thought. And yet they needed not to marvel, if only they had marked the mystery of the wind, that cometh and goeth. But how then should they believe Him now, when He told them of One

* Dean Alford says upon John vi. 63: "He is explaining the *life-giving principle* of which He had been before speaking—He does not say '*My Flesh* profiteth nothing,' but '*the flesh*.' To make Him say this is to make Him contradict His own words in verse 51: τὰ ῥήμ. ἃ ἐγὼ λελάληκα—viz., *the words* μου τὴν σάρκα and μου τὸ αἷμα, *above*. They are, πνεῦμα and ζωή:—spirit, not flesh only:—*living food*, not *carnal* and *perishable*. This meaning has been missed by almost all commentators. Stier upholds it, iv. 281 (2d ed.); and it seems to me *beyond question the right one*.—*The Greek Testament*, I. 769.

who ascended into heaven, to be the Bread of this new life.

And what is our own need to marvel, if we only reverently ponder the mystery of our daily bread. We eat it—but how little even Science knows of that great secret *How* is it that the grain first grows from crudest elements? *How* is it that it is changed into the tender tissue, the tense sinew, and the warm coursing blood? We know it only as a fact. The bounteous table is not spread for us to analyze, but to enjoy.

Enough then, that in spiritual as in natural things, “we know and are sure,” that we are invited to feast upon “true meat, and true drink;” that we eat of Bread ‘that strengtheneth our heart,’ and drink of ‘wine that maketh it glad.’ Who can even describe the cheer and comfort that compass the frame, and that pervading sense of speedy strength, that comes through common sustenance? How then set forth the blessedness of the Heavenly Banquet—the strength and sweetness of the shedding abroad of the Holy Spirit in our hearts—the steady bracing of the whole being—the poising of all its powers—or yet its brimming in the bewilderment of gladness, as this “best wine goeth down sweetly!”* We know not *how*, but we know and are sure by every inner sense that He has given us, that as He feeds us thus—it is His Spirit penetrating our spirit, His soul possessing our soul,

* Cant. vii. 9.

till these mortal bodies feel the quickening Spirit that dwelleth in us, and thrill with the stirring of that new life, in which they shall be raised up at the last day. Even thus, O Great High Priest, King of Righteousness, and King of Peace, dost thou come forth to meet and bless Thy servants, with Thy Bread and Wine !

And so the mystery is made known—dimly to reason, but how brightly to Faith, that “Christ loved the Church, and *gave Himself* for it”—that when it was not good for Him to be alone, the deep sleep fell upon Him, and the Church found His death to be her life. Therefore because it is “His own flesh”—because “we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones,” “He nourisheth and cherisheth it.” Thrice happy Church, thus fed by her Beloved—thus beholding His glory, and so changed into the same image from glory to glory ; in such a wise that at last this body of our lowliness shall be conformed to the Body of His Glory !

And so it is, indeed, no longer as in Egypt, that we now keep the Passover. The Birth feast is changed into a Marriage Feast, and the first miracle at Cana is the perpetual miracle of the loving and believing heart, in which life cleanses, and love purifies. For Christ’s cleansing of His Church, is not after the manner of the purifying of the Jews—a washing of water without, to leave the inner man unchanged. “The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,” as it is

first without, is then within;* the cleansing of the Wine that searches and yet heals; that bringing into our being a vigor not its own, exalts all our powers to the partaking of His divine nature, and fills us with the joy of the Lord.

And here let it be again distinctly stated, that such blessing as this comes through *faith*, and not through any *form*. The Lord Jesus in teaching the great truth, made known but one condition—*believing on Him*. When He afterwards added His ordinance it was based upon this truth—not the truth upon the ordinance. And yet as certainly as He taught the truth, He appointed the form. As surely as He gave His very flesh and very blood, to be our meat and drink—He also gave the bread and wine, to be their tokens. One may well fear lest parted from its striking symbol, the spiritual substance may become, even to the sincere, a shadowy blessing faintly and vaguely apprehended.

The Lord Jesus surely makes every such remembrance of Him the occasion of His special manifestation. “The *cup of blessing* which we bless—is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The *bread*

* “A double benefit becomes ours by the blood of Christ, namely: I. *Deliverance* from the guilt of sin; II. The gift of the new powers of life which are subsequently exercised in good works. The former is called *justification* by the blood of Jesus Christ; and the latter is obtained by the man who eats the flesh of Christ, and drinks His blood; John vi.”—*Bengel's Gnomon—on Heb. xii. 24.*

which we break—is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"* And while thus intensifying our faith in this vital union with our Lord, we at the same time confirm our fellowship with one another—"We being many are *one body*, for we are all partakers of that one bread."† Every supper of the Lord should also be a feast of Charity. Finally, it is the Church's testimony to a Christless world. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do proclaim the Lord's death till He come."‡

Yet let us deeply ponder that which must follow, when in any way the eye of Faith has become so dim as not to discern the Lord's body,—"*For this cause* many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep!"

TILL HE COME. Only a little longer shall we keep

* 1 Cor. x. 16.

"According to the Scripture (John vi.) the Lord was to be in us and with us also in flesh and blood after His ascension; yes, then first truly so. His heavenly flesh and blood pervaded by spirit, and which have become spirit and life, these are the true 'mediating *organs*' of that fellowship which is as really bodily as spiritual; and the bread and the wine are the mediating *symbols* of this in the second degree. Was there not for the Church of the Lord an actual reception of His flesh and blood provided, it *could have no life in itself*, it never would be or could be His *Church*, that is, His *body*. If this reception was not at the same time (not indeed exclusively, but especially) mediated by an external, earthly corporeal element, the Church of the New Testament would have no Sacrament."—*Stier's Words of the Lord Jesus*, vii. 105.

† 1 Cor. x. 17.

‡ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

this Feast; for soon the Holy Supper of our Lord will become the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We do not even rightly remember His dying, unless we are looking for that blessed Hope. How passing sweet His promise—"Until *I drink it NEW with you* in my Father's kingdom!" "When we become as He is, then will He be again as we are; He will eat and drink with us the new fruits of the new world in the fellowship of an eternal enjoyment of the renovated creation of the Father." *

* Rudolph Stier.

CHAPTER X.

THE NEW CORN AND FRUIT OF THE LAND.

“AND THE MANNA CEASED ON THE MORROW AFTER THEY HAD EATEN OF THE NEW CORN OF THE LAND; NEITHER HAD THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL MANNA ANY MORE; BUT THEY DID EAT OF THE FRUIT OF THE LAND OF CANAAN THAT YEAR.”*—(*Josh.* v. 12.)

The most marked providence of the forty years in the wilderness, was the manna. It was the time of man's provocation—yet such was the compassion of God, that he “did eat angels' food.”† For forty years, was God grieved with Israel, yet for forty years, day by day, He gave them their bread from heaven. But now occurs a great change. The promise of God is fulfilled, that in this land they should eat bread, without scarceness.

The lessons contained in this change, are not the least in value of the many which crowd the fifth chapter of Joshua—making it like the cluster of the

* “The produce of the same year; *i. e.*, the new corn.”—*Keil and Delitzsch.*

† *Ps.* lxxviii. 25.

grapes of Eshcol. Among those lessons, the most obvious upon the face of the history are these. The cessation of the manna, marks a return from correction to comfort—from the extraordinary to the ordinary—from the direct provision of God, to His blessing upon their own efforts—yet all in such a way, as to indicate not less, but more, of His goodness.

But to revert to the history of the manna. In Egypt it was the abuse of God's bounty, that they "sat by the flesh pots, and did eat bread to the full."* The satisfaction of the lower wants of our being, though a part of the Creator's design, is never to become an *object* in life. Very good as the means which it was appointed to be—as an end, it is very evil. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," is the lowest possible valuation of life. The tendency of such a full supply, unbalanced by higher pursuits, is always to degrade the soul, to animalize the being, and to give the body an ascendancy over the spirit, instead of keeping it in subjection. Hence excessive fertility nearly always proves a curse.

But the food of Egypt was not only abundant, but gross and stimulating. Bodily appetite had a fearful dominion over the childhood of Israel. The "leeks and cucumbers" seem to have left a stronger impression on their memories, than the ten plagues and the Red Sea. Their murmuring for bread was their first sin. In the provision which the Lord graciously

* Exodus xvi. 3.

made for their need, He introduced a wise discipline. He could still have given them fulness of bread ; but it was far better for them for a time to be trained to abstinence, and to utmost moderation. He gave them, therefore, but one sort of food, and that the lightest. The deep design of this was explained to them by Moses :—"He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know ; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."* In a profound significance, stretching far beyond their earlier sense, Christ used the last of these words in His own hunger. His first temptation was Israel's first, as well as our first and lowest. But even their weak understanding must have grasped a part of the meaning of Moses—Bread was not the chief necessity of life, and hunger was comparatively a small evil. They must be trained to know the needs, and the supplies, of soul life, and spirit life.

When Israel came out of Egypt, their life was little more than such as fish, and onions, and garlic could feed—little more than an animal life. It was not the plan of God to lead His people into permanent distress and poverty. He had promised them a land, full of all good things, where they should eat bread without scarceness. But for the present, scarce-

* Deut. viii. 3.

ness of bread was the needful corrective. How hard that discipline was for them, and how necessary, we see soon afterwards, when that whole camp forgot the dignity of freedom and of manhood, and like so many spoiled children, absolutely cried aloud, because they did not like the food which God had given them.* It was needful to subdue such lust before He could proceed with their moral culture.

And then He fed them by other words out of His mouth. All His commands, and all His ways, were such words, and by every one was their being nourished and developed. He fed them by the very sublimity of their mountain path, as they marched downward to Sinai. By each grand form, and by each lovely tint, He fed both the strength and the tenderness of their nature. By all the routine of the journey, by all the closer companionships of lives set free from servitude, He fed them. By all the awe and terror of Sinai, and most of all by His holy Law, He fed them, and made them live. And they grew. Mental and moral manhood were developed. Even in their wanderings, when He had to give them so largely the bread of adversity, and the waters of affliction, they still grew ; and most of all, in readiness of soul, to receive more real blessing from God. And now over Jordan, life was another thing for them. They had been lifted up in the scale of being. The correction had wrought out its purpose, and they

* See Numbers xi. 4.

could again be trusted with the good things of earth. So the manna ceased, and the corn and all the fruitage of Canaan were theirs. They had learned their lesson, that the life was more than meat. And now that they were ready for it, God gave them all that was needed to sustain such a life.

How easily one can picture the gathering of the families of Israel to their first repast, the day after the manna ceased—to partake, with an almost child-like pleasure, of the good things so long promised. And yet how all greediness would be held in check, by their reverent sense of God's own gifts. What thanksgivings must have gone up that day from the tables in the Camp of Gilgal!

The training of His people of old in this manner, is the pattern from which God still works, in His loving correction. Our outward bread is the natural symbol of all that can be called food in a wider sense; of all that comes to nourish up the life of our complex being—to develop it, and to strengthen it—embracing all that in this outward creation yields support of any kind to our nature—all the manifold providences of God, and events of life—all the influences of our fellow-beings, and all that descends to us from God out of heaven.

It is a primary law of all organic life that it must be fed; and the higher it is, from the more sources must its supplies be sought. He who fixed these laws in our being, has at the same time created their

supplies, and given us the instincts to seek them. So long as these instincts are natural and healthy, all that they desire must be good.

We may apply this to the manifold blessings of life—Health is good; Wealth is good; Happiness is good; and on the contrary, disease, poverty, and grief, are all in themselves evils, and the derangements of God's highest plan. But even the best things, even things the most needful, are good for us only when we are prepared to use them rightly. And as we take away from the sick child much of the food which was previously good, and do not allow his appetite to have its way, so God is compelled to take away from the being disordered by sin, many of His best gifts, since they would only increase the evil.

In this process by which He restores us, we are bound to co-operate. We must accept, not only with submission, but with sweetness, the medicine instead of food, the little instead of the much. So blessings suffer for the time a reversal. Thus poverty may be the present blessing, and God choose the poor of this world, to make them only rich in faith *now*—but in the return to the true estimate of things, heirs of a kingdom *hereafter*. Adversity may thus be the present blessing, but not the highest and truest—Prosperity is that. Light food and scanty, are these limitations of our being, pressing us on every hand.

But while we accept this humbling, and suffering of hunger, which come if need be—and how common

is that need—we ought not to be content with their continuance beyond it. We need to distinguish in the work of God upon us, very carefully, between that which is directly progressive, and that which is remedial. From a neglect of this, have sprung the evils of asceticism, and the extremes of Puritanism. The sick man, who has found his medicine and spare diet agree with his weakness, does well to recommend them to the weak; but it would be quite another thing, to persuade the healthy and strong to adopt the same regimen.

“The Giving God” desires ever to give us His best; but that best is something altogether relative to our state. It is not judgment, but mercy rejoicing against judgment, that when man has broken the commandments, makes the flaming sword turn every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. But it is Love, that, when man is so blessed as to keep these commandments, gives him again the “right to the tree of life.” Until we have the grace to receive and use God’s gifts aright, it is better for us to be without them; but far better to be so restored as to safely use them—better for us, and better for His glory. So, then, when He gives us for our bread a light thing, and gives it by measure, we do well to ask Him that we may be speedily “humbled,” and “proved,” and “taught,” that so we may, like Israel, pass on to richer and truer blessings.

But to pass to another lesson. There was to be no

more an infantile dependence upon the provision of God. That bread from heaven had needed no sowing, no tilling, no reaping: it only asked to be gathered. Yet He led them not backward, but forward in privilege, in ordering that henceforth their supplies should bear a proportion to their own energies. Such is ever our Father's way with His children—first to work for them, and then to make them co-workers with Him. In giving us some of His choicest things, He absolutely requires this co-operation; and even doubles the value of His gifts, by the training and development of all our powers.

It is an utter mistake, therefore, to regard the Lord as any less the Giver, for giving to us through our own selves, as instruments. He may be all the more working for us, and blessing us, when He sets His gifts at a little remove from us, and even with many intervening obstacles.

Again, another kindred lesson here shadowed forth is this. It may seem paradoxical, but it is simply a matter of experience, that as our lives become more spiritual, they also become more natural, and there is less *seemingly* of the extraordinary about them.

But in this we do indeed see only in part. For Law, and Order, are but names which we give to the ways of God's working, so far as they have become familiar *to us*. Probably all the works to which we give other names, calling them miraculous, and supernatural, are equally within the range of Law and

Order, as seen by higher intelligences. Just as the native of the Tropics knows some of the laws of water; while the savage of another zone knows an added law, which completely sets aside the others, and the ice-bound river is his easy path, instead of a perilous flood. The man of science finds out yet another law, and bids this same element carry him swiftly over land and sea.

So, as our spiritual apprehension enlarges, we note this change—the ordinary works of God appear more extraordinary; and the extraordinary, more in accord with the ordinary. In the latter, the element of mere marvel and astonishment fades from our minds, as we consider those laws that lie beyond our world, and how easy and natural are all things to Omnipotence. And in the former case, we come to understand, that His simplest handiwork is so full of skill, as to demand His constant supervision. Such recognition of the power, and present working of God in all common things, prepares us in the most healthy manner for a further insight into His hidden ways. How can one who has really confessed his Creator, doubt the possibility of any miracle? How can one who has watched the daily unfolding of His providences, doubt His interposition at any needful point?

Among the designs of miracles, a chief one seems to have been to call the attention of men to God. When they fell on their faces and cried, "The Lord He is the God," the end was sufficiently answered. A

good example of this is the gift of tongues. It was all-important to bring the early Church to a clear recognition of the power and presence of the Spirit. This accomplished, their service ceased, except as they might be needed to produce a like effect on others. So St. Paul presents the case—"Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not."*

But again, there are other signs to "follow them that believe," in which the object is to restore the order disarranged by sin.† The miracles of Christ were very largely of this class; as, for instance, all His works of healing. For this there was needed the momentary exercise of some new law, after which there would be an immediate return to the old laws, which had sufficed for their work.

In the case of the manna, both the above objects appear. That barren desert was an abnormal thing, not at all in the original perfection of God's works. For obvious reasons, He did not give it permanent fertility; but for the time, He made good the supply it

* I Cor. xiv. 22.

† Christlieb, in his admirable volume on "Modern Doubt and Christian Belief," after showing that miracles belonged especially to "the epoch *in which the Church was first founded*," claims that in the work of missions "miracles should not be entirely wanting—nor are they. We can not, therefore, fully admit the proposition that no more miracles are performed in our day. *In the history of modern missions, we find many wonderful occurrences which unmistakably remind us of the apostolic age.*" He goes on to give several pages of instances—See Lecture V., iii.

should have yielded. Then, also, the other purpose was accomplished, that they clearly recognized God as the Giver of daily bread. And to those who had learned this, the gift of the manna would seem a simple thing by the side of that munificence, which year after year brought forth from the rain of heaven, and the dust of the earth, the nutritious grain—the figs and pomegranates—the olive, with its golden soothing oil—the vine, with its purple kindling juice—and working on through the mysterious chemistry of animal life, made the land flow with milk and honey. But for the manna, they might have seen no miracle in all this—might have taken it as from Nature, and not from God. “There is not, indeed,” as has been well said, “a miracle on record, that can compete with the miracles of Creation and Providence.”

Moreover, it is most mischievous to become absorbed with the extraordinary—as happened in the Corinthian Church—and to prefer what is striking, to the simple and serviceable. Man, as a rule, can bear very little of the extraordinary. He is very apt to abuse it for some display.

And now to make these considerations more practical. Few persons, probably, pass through a full Christian experience, without some special display of the Lord's power. Most frequently this occurs at an early stage, or else at some subsequent marked period of growth, and anxiety is often felt at its

withdrawal. Perhaps the soul was fed by some word of God, that fell clear as a Voice speaking from heaven. Perhaps some wondrous vision was spread out before the eye. But when this manna ceases, has God's bounty ceased? No, the new corn of the land, and all its fruits, are theirs. Only now He would have them search the Scriptures. He would have them meditate in His law. He would have them even wait for the precious fruit of the earth. And if they accept this ordering of their lives, they will find their souls led on to really richer blessings, for which the extraordinary visitation was only meant to prepare them. They become more simple, and more spiritual, at once.

Thus does the Master keep His disciples from straining their life to an unnatural pitch, where, unable to sustain it, they are nearly sure to break down altogether. There are lines of thought and experience which it is well for us to be trained to *touch* at times, but to be fastened there, would be the destruction of the soul.

And the Master Himself is our example here. Look at the life of the Lord Jesus. There were great crises in it—hours and days that were most extraordinary. Witness His Baptism, the Temptation, the Transfiguration. But as soon as the high occasion passes, His life moves on again, simply, and sweetly, without any strain. Indeed, notwithstanding all that

so widely separates it from other lives, the intense naturalness of Jesus, is one of His chief human attractions.

We see this also in the life of Paul. There is no assumption, no cant, no attempt to act a part. He is real, throughout all the constant changes of his career. How cheerfully he comes down from his third heaven, to his thorn in the flesh. How humbly he owns his danger of getting exalted above measure.

It was a choice tribute that was lately rendered to a noble Christian woman, that "her natural life was so completely Christian, that her Christian life became completely natural." In truth, simplicity is a vital element in all greatness, most of all in that which is spiritual. It measures also very closely that which is *lovable*. Sanctimoniousness is a widely different thing from sanctity. The effort needed to support it in all its conventional proprieties, exhausts the resources of life. The nature is so spent in seeming, that it has no strength for being.

In eating the new corn of the land, there was a return to simple, natural ways. They turned from the Paschal feast to find their common life crowned with bounty. When once Christ has lifted us up to sit in the heavenlies, to eat His body, and to drink His blood, then He returns to sup also with us. When we have seen the slain Lamb in the midst of the Throne, we see Christ in all things. He fills and hallows the whole sphere of our humanity, so that henceforth we

can call nothing unclean. In the most common things of life, "sanctified by the word of God and prayer," man may eat more than angels' food; and life in loving loyalty to Jesus, may become one long blessed sacrament. Of more than the broken bread may it be said, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

Every service which He appoints, every pursuit which He sanctions, every pleasure which He provides—all of these as we take them in His name, and for His sake, shall be to us like the corn and fruits of Canaan—more abundant and more luscious for all our care—and yet His own daily gifts, strengthening and refreshing us, and helping us to grow up into Him *in all things*. Bread without scarceness, food in richest variety, even the fat of the Land, shall the willing and obedient eat; for it is a high and complex being that is to be thus fed.

Such a view of our ultimate liberty will keep us, even in the midst of much present sacrifice and self-denial, free from all narrowness of spirit, and especially from its worst form, censoriousness. We can not always tell, who still needs to be fed with manna, and who may eat the fruit of Canaan. The correction and training of His children, rest with God alone; and few things are more difficult, than to judge the liberty or restraint of others. "Every creature of God is good"—This is the broad, true ground of liberty claimed by an Apostle. Yet practically—for inexpediency, for present necessity, for the weakness

of others—who so ready as he, to “eat no meat while the world standeth.”

“He who is weak eateth herbs.” We may pity, but not despise him for it. Nor may this herb-eater, as is very common, judge him who believeth that he may eat all things. He is safe, while “he eateth to the Lord, and giveth God thanks.”

Go, then, ye that are hungering, and gather the bread of the land. Feed first on Christ, and then on all He gives you. “Sow your fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.” Let even the fallow ground be made to bring forth your sustenance. Consecrate the wide field of life to Christ, and He will command His blessing upon it all. Give your all to Him, and then out of the hundred fold which He returns to you, let every faculty which you possess—your every power—your whole character and being—be built up, as becomes the noblest workmanship of God upon this earth.

But we come now to the deepest lesson to be drawn from this ceasing of the manna, and eating of the fruit of the land. Any view of it would be incomplete which overlooked Christ’s own reference to it. “He that eateth me even he shall live by me. *This* is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live forever.”* Jesus Himself, then, is the true Antitype of the manna. To

* John vi. 58.

believe that Jesus is the Christ, to confess that He has come in the flesh, this is to have life. No soul that accepts Him in His life and death shall ever perish.

But Christ came not merely to give us life, but "life more abundantly." And as we follow on to know the Lord, we know Him not only as He that lived and died for us, but as the Living One—alive forevermore. And if His life and death were the very bread of heaven, and the stricken Rock, that saved us when we were ready to perish in our hunger and thirst, so also His resurrection life in Heaven, is as the rich and abundant fruit of Canaan. All of His life that lies upon this side Jordan is the manna, but the full fruition is Christ glorified. Yet only to one who has well learned the saving truth—"It is Christ that died," can there possibly be a greater—"Yea *rather* that is risen again." The manna had ceased for Paul, and he was feasting on the richer portion, when he said—"Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." *

It is impossible to receive the full knowledge of Christ, through what He was on earth. For He "humbled Himself"—"emptied Himself"—"had no form nor comeliness"—was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." All this was to cease—all

* 2 Cor. v. 16.

power, all glory, all loveliness, all joy, all unsearchable riches, are in Him as our Lord in Glory.

Every one must have felt at times, that Christ's life did not, after all, touch our life at many points. We see why it could not be, but this does not quiet the longing that it might have been. How widely removed from our lives, for instance, as we know that God Himself orders them, in close family affection and dependence, and in all innocent pleasures, was the life of Jesus. We take our fill of the joy of social converse—we smile, and laugh,—and it almost startles us as we turn to our Great Example, to remember that no such record is given of Him. Nay further, there are many things which we do daily, which we do not like to think of Him as also doing. We would rather have it written that “Jesus wept,” than that He smiled; and yet our very smiles are sad, unless they can somehow claim His sympathy.

But all that we miss in Him, in that short wilderness journey, we can surely claim as His, now that He has entered into His rest. His whole life was a losing of life for the Gospel's sake; and yet surely, as He said it should be with us, He kept it unto Life eternal. The Man Christ Jesus, mediating between God and man, walked this earth with the vow of a Nazarite upon Him—separated for His service sake from much of the very joy which He came to bring. The Nazarite, of old, might not drink the strong wine, nor even the juice of the grape, nor eat the moist grape

itself, nor yet the dry; nor even so much as taste husk or kernel.* But this was only for "all the days of his separation;" "and *after that*, the Nazarite may drink wine." So also he might not shave his beard, and the long hair must mark neglect and subjection;—"Until the days be fulfilled, he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow."†

The days of Jesus' vow were the days of His life on earth, marked by the renunciation of social joys, and human honor. But His vow was ended when He cried, "It is finished." And now we may not think of the risen Lord as still a man of sorrows, nor count our Pattern, to be no more than the homely web of a Galilean life. His *humanity* has been glorified with the same glory, which already as to His divinity, He had with the Father before the world was. And far more glorious than the cunning work upon the veil of the Temple of old, is the work now wrought upon what was once His flesh. "The Glory Man" has risen infinitely above all that the highest culture of this world ever reached. All that God ever gave our human nature, has found its full and pure development in Him. And being all this Himself, we may not limit His sympathies with us, by what He once did, and was, on earth. He would have us even in this sense "through His poverty become rich."

The beginning of His miracles was not to remove

* Num. vi. 3, 4.

† Num. vi. 5

human sorrow, or to heal disease ; nor was it to meet a necessity of life, but to add to its festive joy. He who so late, would not so much as turn stones into bread, to satisfy the hunger of His long fast, turned water into wine, for those who had before "well drunk." Even so He waits to supply all our need, "according to *His riches in Glory*."

"Thou drawest all things to an Order fair ;
The things we treasure most, with those our haste
Doth count for nought, alike in Thee are graced
With beauty past compare.

"For all grows sweet in Thee,
Since Thou didst gather us in One, and bring
This fading flower of our humanity
To perfect blossoming !" *

Let none for a moment think, that by turning thus to the glorified Christ we slight His life, much less His death. It is the manna first ; next the Passover ; then, all the fruit of the land : and the manna ceased not until they kept their Passover. Only through the gate of His death, can we pass to His joyful resurrection.

And let it not be forgotten that our Lord may call us also, for an appointed season, or even for a whole life, to the vow of a Nazarite. We may be keenly alive to the stimulus and delight of a high-toned social circle, and yet put this exhilarating draught

* Poems, by the Author of "The Patience of Hope."

aside—to go down the ranks of society, and give a cup of cold water to some little one. And beholding Art in her manifold attractions, conscious of some of her creative power, we may yet hasten from her temple—to make like Dorcas, garments for the widow, and to be “full of good works and alms-deeds.”

And if God so call us, it shall only be our greater gain. It shall be no slighting, no wasting, of any gift He has given us. Many a seed of sacrifice bears its hundred-fold in this life: and those which can not, sown in Christ’s grave, shall when we are glorified with Him, receive a life everlasting.

Faint shadow, then, of the fulness of our Lord, wert thou, O Land of Judea, in those days of thy bounty. Thy cool springs from the depths beneath, thy showers in their season, thy early and thy latter rain, thy fields of waving corn and the joy of thy harvest, thy trees with all their goodly-laden boughs, thy vines and the gladness of thy vintage, the excellency of thy Carmel and the glory of thy Lebanon—faint shadows in all ye gave of old, of what He gives, in whose Risen Life “WE LIVE, AND MOVE, AND HAVE OUR BEING.”

CHAPTER XI.

SEEING THE CAPTAIN.

“AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN JOSHUA WAS BY JERICO, THAT HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES AND LOOKED, AND BEHOLD, THERE STOOD A MAN OVER AGAINST HIM WITH HIS SWORD DRAWN IN HIS HAND; AND JOSHUA WENT UNTO HIM, AND SAID UNTO HIM, ART THOU FOR US, OR FOR OUR ADVERSARIES? AND HE SAID, NAY; BUT I AM THE PRINCE OF THE ARMY OF JEHOVAH; NOW I AM COME.”*—(*Josh.* v. 13, 14.)

The preparation of Israel for the Conquest has been traced step by step, but it is still incomplete until the Conqueror is seen. It would almost appear that Joshua stood by Jericho, lifting up his eyes, and looking in some expectancy. Certainly he had been prepared for this by all the previous revelations of the Law. He had learned of Him as Creator, by all His manifest mastery over His own works; he had learned of Him as Ruler, drawing very nigh to man in government, and judgment; he knew also of that holy Presence between the Cherubim; but the prom-

* Keil and Delitzsch.

ises of God pointed to a still more personal manifestation.

It had been said to Moses at Sinai, "Behold I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for *my name is in him*."* This promise which plainly indicated the Lord Himself, was withdrawn after the sin of the golden calf, and some angel of lower order substituted:—"I will send an Angel before thee . . . for I will not go up in the midst of thee."† The mourning of the people over these evil tidings, and the intercession of Moses, resulted in the restoration of this blessing;—"My Face shall go, and I will give thee rest."‡ It was as Isaiah tells us—"The Angel of His Face saved them. In His love and in His pity, He redeemed them: and He bare them and carried them all the days of old." §

When the Lord thus renewed this promise, it was in the cloudy pillar at the Tabernacle door, speaking unto Moses "face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend." Joshua, who remained always near at hand, must have heard the promise, and must have known also of the vision which followed it in the Cleft of the Rock. That promise now belonged to him; for as

* Ex. xxiii. 20, 21. † Ex. xxxiii. 2, 3. ‡ Ex. xxxiii. 14.

§ Is. lxiii. 9. See Keil and Delitzsch, Com. on Pentateuch. Vol. II., p. 235.

given at first, it had made mention of these nations now before them, and declared that they should be thus cut off. Was not this the time of need? Was not the enemy within their very sight?—where was the Angel then? How the prayers of his heart must have been poured out, as he stood and looked. What sign would the Lord give him? If His Face was there, would He show it? Not in great glory, not even in angelic might, did the Lord appear; but so simply, so humanly, that Joshua saw only that He was a stranger. That sword in His hand meant warfare. But was it an enemy, or was it indeed some helper sent by God? And now he learns that it is no earthly captain, but the great Leader of all the heavenly hosts of God. Joshua may remain the Captain of Israel's forces, but meantime another Captain, and another army, are to fight their battles for them, and subdue the Land.

There had been previously no manifestation of Jehovah, which so mingled the human and the Divine. Never before had one with the form and voice of a man, called upon man to render him the honor given to God only.—Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and no voice restrained him, saying—"See thou do it not;" but, "the Captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."* Moses had done

* Josh. v. 15.

this, when God called to him out of the midst of the burning bush ; but now a man worships a seeming Man : this heralds the Incarnation and anticipates the Gospel. In the revelation of this Person —this Prince—the blessed preparation for possessing the land clearly culminates.

It is true that the eyes of one man only, saw this Captain ; but in some sense he saw for all his people : he saw Him but for a few moments, and yet he saw for all those years of warfare. Never in any coming hour of battle, could he forget that there before them stood One, whose sword it was inconceivable that any foe could resist. Nor could he ever feel again, that further responsibility rested upon him, than faithfully to follow. Another led them on ; Another gave command ; Another always conquered. There are often sudden revelations to the soul, which contain the strength of years to come—which, like the lightning flash in the darkness, reveal the path, where the feet may tread safely, long afterward. To have seen the Lord, though for a moment, that is to be strong for a whole life.

In granting such a revelation to Joshua, as a personal privilege, the Lord recognized a very real need in our nature. The heart instinctively demands *a Person*, as the object of its trust, and the closest possible knowledge of that Person. You give to such a craving heart a creed ; it may be well, but it is only another need that you have met. You give it doc-

trine; you give it the various relations of truth; it gathers up its treasure, and still is full of longing; for this human heart is all alive, and can find communion only in life. You go further still, and give it the clearest teaching of a Personal Christ, and of the absolute personality of the Spirit; but only all the more will it reach out beyond even this, and say—"My heart and my flesh crieth out for THE LIVING GOD!" "*We would see Jesus,*" is the demand of the most distant, who have heard of Him afar off; and it is the one overmastering desire of those who have come the nearest.

In what way, then, and to what extent, has Christ provided for the satisfaction of this desire? The Incarnation has met it in part. The foundation for it was laid very solidly in that mystery—"God manifest in the flesh." Nor is the blessing of that manifestation at all limited to the brief period in which it was a present fact; it reaches back through all the time, in which Prophecy pointed expectantly to the Coming One, and forward through all the ages to which the testimony of His life is handed down. Apart from the basis of such a fact, a spiritual revelation could have little power; all would be vague and shadowy, and there could be little vividness of mental or spiritual apprehension. But this the Incarnation has secured; and the blessedness of it has been emphasized for us, by the one who knew it beyond all others, and yet sought to share it with all—"That

which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we *have seen with our eyes*, that which we *looked upon*, and our *hands handled*, concerning the Word of Life—(And the life was *manifested*, and we *have seen* it, and bear witness of it, and declare to you that Life which is eternal, the which was with the Father and was *manifested to us*)—that which we have heard and seen, we declare to you also, in order that *ye also may have communion with us.*"* Such a reality, preserved by such testimony, may transmit to an unlimited future the fellowship of Christ. Jesus *has* lived upon this earth; and the simple belief of this record by all those whose eyes never saw Him, brings a blessing not surpassed by theirs who because they saw, therefore believed. Bethlehem and Calvary share in the mysterious nature of Eternity, stretching backward and forward.

But the outward manifestation of Christ is not our sole need;—there is still a deeper, which not even the endless perpetuation of His life upon this earth, could have met. "It is *expedient* for you that I go away," said Jesus—expedient, because He must reveal Himself, both more intimately, and more universally, to His own. He must come in such a way that not only in Galilee and Judea, may great multitudes behold Him—but that over all the earth, without any intervening space for the foot to travel, wherever a long-

* 1 John i. 1-3. See Dean Alford's "Greek Testament."

ing eye is lifted, there it shall see Jesus. He must come, moreover, in such a way, that something more precious even than outward presence—His spirit, His inner life—may be revealed, and revealed also to that which is highest in us—our spirit. Even when outwardly manifested, there was no true perception of Him without this. When Peter confessed Him as Christ, the Son of the living God, it was the Father who revealed it unto him. So also no man was ever to be able to say that Jesus Christ was Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. It was an inestimable blessing to St. Paul, to be added as last of the many hundred witnesses who saw the Lord in His resurrection Body;* but it was a blessing even beyond this to have Christ revealed *in* him.† Unquestionably the fullest revelation of all will be that which will combine both of these; and while we exult in the glorious manifestation of Christ through the Spirit, we may not forget that the true Apocalypse is yet to come. Not till He who has redeemed our Spirits, shall have redeemed our Bodies also, can we see Him as He is—"face to face." But being what we now are, the manifestation through the Spirit, is a richer blessing than was given in the days of His flesh. While we wait for His coming to receive us unto Himself, we know that He has said of that time of waiting—"I will not leave you comfortless:

* 1 Cor. xv. 6, 8.

† Gal. i. 16.

I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye *see* me." *

What then is the nature of *this* coming?—Is it to be a mere influence, reaching us from One who dwells afar off?—Is it only *thinking of* the Lord Jesus, and giving Him a place in our hearts—nay, enshrining Him in our deepest affections?—A strange question is this to ask, in the face of such promises; and yet this is the poor pittance that many gather from His blessed words! And they will tell you, how when a beloved earthly friend goes far from you, your thoughts will follow still to the other side of the globe, and so bring the cherished presence back; that his image will abide in your heart; his life as you have known it still influence your life; so that still he seems ever with you;—and that even thus it is that Christ dwells in our hearts by faith.

All this is true, but it is only a tithe of the great spiritual truth.—We see at once that were there nothing beyond this ideal presence, we could never claim for it a real personality. But this personality it was that Jesus promised, and so carefully reiterated—"I will not leave you orphans; *I* will come to you:"—"He the spirit of truth shall come." It is not only our thought following Him into His heavenly home; it is not only His thought constantly fixed upon us in the midst of His glory—but it is a *Power*

* John xiv. 18, 19.

it is a *Presence*—it is a PERSON who comes—“*I will come*”—“*I will see you*”—“*I will manifest myself.*”

And in this last form of promise, He clearly gives us to understand that we should have perception of His presence. He would make His coming clear and satisfying to our souls—a substance, not a shadow. He would give an evidence which should appeal not indeed to bodily senses, but to spiritual: He implies that they also are trustworthy; that as the sight, and hearing, and touch, are accepted as soundest evidence, unless the witness be disqualified by bodily or mental disease—so a spiritual sense, more subtle, but not less sure, should attest the reality of spiritual things. Not only are we warranted in accepting such impressions as conclusive to ourselves, but there may be results which shall become appreciable evidence to others. The words of Jesus respecting our being born of the Spirit, may apply to every subsequent manifestation of His—“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and *thou hearest the sound thereof*, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth:” Something shown, and something secret—concealing, even while revealing—this is for the present the manner of the Spirit, and the way of all Divine manifestations. The evidence is addressed to Faith; and while there will always be enough to meet its needs, the false demands of Reason will not be met. Such a manifestation can never be less than a mystery; but it is one of the mysteries which Christ has said

should be given to us to know. How clearly is such evidence contrasted by St. Paul with that of the senses, and yet claimed to be equally reliable—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard"—"but God hath revealed by His Spirit;" and again we have the same contrast, and claim—"What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." To make this still clearer, it is added—"The natural (psychical) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* No words could well make it plainer, that both the revelation, and the perception, are God's gifts to the believer; that in receiving spiritual life, he receives new powers, and new senses;—in fact, an absolute enlargement and elevation of his being. Yet it is also shown to be necessary, that by reason of use these senses should be exercised. In the fact that they are so often neglected, lies the explanation of very much of the weakness and helplessness of those, who in these respects are babes, when they should be men of full age. Yet how difficult for one to describe what sight and hearing are, to the blind and deaf; and almost more difficult still to convey

* 1 Cor. ii. 9-14.

their nice discriminations, and most delicate perceptions, to untrained eyes and ears.

That the soul has such a perception, that such manifestations of Himself are given by Christ, has been in all ages the clear consciousness, and calm testimony, of those who have walked most closely with God. No one can call in question the fact, that under the old Dispensation, such knowledge of heavenly things was repeatedly given;—that not only Prophets, but many a humbler servant of God, saw and heard far beyond the range of his natural senses. Surely that which was extraordinary and exceptional then, was never designed to utterly vanish with the personal coming of the Holy Spirit. Christ's own announcement to Nathaniel teaches us quite otherwise: His new follower marvelled *because Jesus had seen him* under the fig-tree; but the time had come, when His disciples should not only be seen, but see.—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, HENCEFORTH, *ye shall see* heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”* Nor dare we limit these words to spiritual sight: the Body which is hallowed as a Temple by the indwelling Spirit may have its vision also; and it is not for us to say, how soon it shall be given, or how far it shall be able to reach. One memorable instance we have of its power, when Stephen, “being *full* of the Holy Ghost, *looked up* steadfastly into heaven, and saw the

* John i. 51.

glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, *I see the heavens opened*, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."* And if we may judge at all from well-avouched records in the past, and from the sacred scenes that are cherished in so many memories of the living, there must have been thousands upon thousands since Stephen fell asleep, who ready to depart and be with Christ, had not only spiritual vision of Him—but as if in pledge and foretaste of their resurrection, knew the Spirit so to quicken their mortal bodies, that the eye saw, and the ear heard. Cherished as such instances rightly are, as sacred secrets by the survivors, they can not be discredited by thousands of others that might be cited, of the hallucinations of unbalanced and unregulated minds; though even in these instances what may be the *residuum* of truth, and how far the Lord may condescend to great weakness and ignorance, it is not always safe for us to judge.†

But such questions lie beyond the subject properly before us, which is that of *such a spiritual manifestation of Christ to our spirits as shall be both sensible and sure*. The witnesses of this reality are beyond suspicion, and they are many, albeit not multitudes.

* Acts vii. 55, 56.

† In this exception the writer has chiefly in mind, the large number of such statements which she has heard from the former slaves of the South—told with such sincerity that one could not slight them.

That the world at large knows nothing of all this, is in precise accordance with the limitations of the promise—"Whom the world *can not* receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." Again that all the children of God are not conscious of such a presence, that with many it is rare or interrupted, and with others so faint as to bring little assurance, is also precisely what we might infer from the condition of the promise—"How is it," asked one of his Lord, "that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, *If a man love Me, he will keep My words*: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."* Once more—"He that followeth Me," said Jesus, "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."† Will not those who love most, know most of the Holy Presence? Will not those who follow closely, see much; and those who follow afar off, see little? And yet there are instances of apparently close walking, where the Heavenly vision is not given: there are loving souls that can find no link between them and their Lord, more real and living than His Word which He has left them. Baffling as are some of these cases, yet in many of them—only He who searches the heart can know whether in all or not—there are visible hindrances. Such a hindrance, is the assertion of the natural powers beyond their proper province; for

* John xiv. 22, 23.

† John viii. 12.

Reason, and keen Analysis are out of their sphere in this Presence. When they are even applied to the experience of others, the sensitive soul shrinks from them as from the horror of a vivisection. Especially is there a lack in many of that childlikeness of spirit, which is always foremost in privilege—the readiness and the receptivity of the guileless spirit, and the quick response to the least token of His presence:—“Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven *as a little child*, shall *in no wise* enter therein.” And if it must be so that he enters the kingdom, how otherwise shall he see the King?

“The childlike faith that asks not sight,
Waits not for wonder or for sign,
Believes, because it loves aright—
Shall see things greater, things divine.”

Again, how often is the hindrance some *slight* reservation. The soul, half conscious of the difficulty, argues—But this is such a *little* thing; besides, it is a somewhat *doubtful* thing; it could not surely hinder my Lord from revealing Himself. But, remember, it is written, “If a man *love Me*,” and has true love *any* reserve? Have you never known how a very little concealment may mar a human fellowship? Have you never noticed, also, how the extent to which you can speak of *very little things* to others, and seek their counsel in them, measures not only your confidence, but the mutual intimacy? We love to go often to that home where nothing is hidden from

us, nothing changed for our coming; but where the whole life as it is, is lived out simply before us. Visits of ceremony are not pleasurable upon either side, and the Comforter never so comes.

Still another hindrance exists in the vague apprehension of the promise itself, so that many might answer, not wholly unlike the disciples at Ephesus: "We have not so much as heard that the Holy Spirit does so manifest Himself, and that we may enjoy the presence of the Lord Jesus." Faithful answers returned from all Christendom to this question—What is the Presence of Christ to your souls?—would doubtless bring to light an astonishing sum of ignorance as to this great blessing. Finally, the position will be taken by many, that this is a treasure so choice as to be offered only to a few; and that while some are no doubt permitted to enjoy this richest of God's gifts, the majority must be content to walk by faith, and not by sight. They say, mournfully, "The Quest is not for me." But surely the promise of Christ is partial, only, in requiring a certain sort of receptivity which His grace makes possible to all believers. Not a hint is given of any other restriction. The gift of the Spirit implies every degree of privilege to which we will suffer Him to guide us, and that gift, the Apostle Peter declared to be "unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."*

* Acts ii. 39.

As to the invidious distinction, drawn between walking by faith and walking by sight, it is quite irrelevant to the question. For what is Faith, if we accept the only direct definition of it which is given in the Scriptures? "Now, Faith is the substance (ὑπόστασις) of things hoped for, the evidence (ἐλεγχος) of things not seen." * Whatever may be the full force of these words, whether we choose to fritter away their grand objective solidity, to a mere subjective shadow or not—one thing it is certain, they can not mean;—a mere belief *about* the things hoped for and unseen. They suggest no possible contrast to sight, but even in their lowest significance, confirm the fact of an inner vision, of the most certain kind, enjoyed by Faith. When St. Paul spoke of walking "by faith and not by *appearance*," † he was dwelling upon the difference between this inner vision, and that more open one which awaits us in the Resurrection—so much more glorious and satisfying, that we can not cease from longing for it.

It is not easy to appreciate the knowledge of anything of which we are ignorant; and so the question has been asked—'Of what practical use can such a manifestation be? Does it secure anything beyond mere transient joy? May not one be as strong who simply takes the Word of God, and walks by its light, trusting to the secret coöperation of the Spirit?'

* Heb. xi. 1.

† 2 Cor. v. 6-8.

No one who has ever known the Lord in the way which He has promised, could possibly assent to this. The higher knowledge of Jesus is absolutely incommunicable, through even the most precious of those words given by inspiration of God—"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now *mine eye seeth Thee*," marks a new mode of acquainting oneself with the Lord. It is as with the friends we love. We may have known much through hearing of them, much more through the frequent reading of their own best thoughts, and yet, when for the first time we meet, a few days of personal presence puts us in such possession of their inmost nature, of the character as a whole, and of our own share in their love, as it were hopeless to think of gaining in any other way. True, we have to wait for the full day-dawn, and the Day-Star, to know even as we are known; but even in the light of the Morning Star, we do *know in part*. This knowledge of His blessed Presence, enriches and endears all other knowledge of Him. It is a constant illumination for His Word; for now, as we read, we see ever the expression of His eye; as we listen, we ever hear the intonation of His own voice; the word becomes a living Word, when Faith has seen the Lord. But, not only does the manifest presence of Jesus give fuller knowledge, and impart greater strength, but beyond anything else, it intensifies Love. It is the instinctive yearning of love to be near the beloved one. The richest part of its life is in that love. Is it

not, then, because God is Love, that He so manifests Himself?—that *He* can not stay far off from the desire of His own eyes?—and that, therefore, if a man love Him and keep His words, the Father will love him, and they—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—will come and make their abode in him who so loves? He who has missed this presence of the Lord, has missed *the joy of joys*—“the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” He who has missed this Presence, has missed also one of the chief secrets of his sanctification. How can any one become like the Lord, without seeing Him?—since we are told that it is by beholding in a mirror the glory of the Lord, that we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. When the heart turns to the Lord with the veil that hides this glory, He has said that it shall be taken away; He who heard the prayer of Moses will hear our prayer, “*I beseech Thee, show me Thy Glory.*”

And only to such seeking souls, is there any security that they will find Him. Even His coming again in visible glory, is limited in its blessing, “unto them *who look for Him.*” * So it is written also, “The Lord *whom ye seek* shall suddenly come to His Temple.” † And we may venture to apply to the coming of the Lord by His Spirit, that which was said of His glorious appearing, “Looking for and *hastening* His

* Heb. ix. 28.

† Mal. iii. 1.

coming." Even now, the Lord *whom ye seek*, and *whom ye delight in*, is He who comes. Nor will any fitful seeking suffice: it must be the settled attitude of the soul. The Good Shepherd seeketh His lost sheep *until* He find it, and thus should we return to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. It was when Joshua lifted up his eyes and *looked*, that he saw the Heavenly Captain:—How many may miss their Lord for want of this! We see quickly, and see often, whatever interests us most. The Naturalist will put to shame a common eye, by the ease with which he everywhere discovers his treasures: he has learned *where* to look and *how* to look. In this busy, bustling age, the Christian too often allows the hurry of the world to sweep away all repose of soul; so that he has no noontide hour when he can sit like Abraham in his tent-door, ready to call in the angels; with leisure enough to lift up his eyes and look, and with love enough to run to meet the heavenly Visitant, and constrain Him to tarry, saying—"My Lord, if now I have found favor in Thy sight, pass not away, I pray Thee, from Thy servant." *

Blessed be God that seeing the Lord Jesus, we see Him as our Captain, not only commanding His army here on earth—but Prince of all principalities and powers. The whole host of heaven is at His command: He can send forth, as He pleases, the ministering spirits, "to minister to them who shall be heirs of

* Gen. xviii. 1-3.

salvation." Having seen His Face as our light and our salvation, how calmly can we front the enemy. "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident."*

And blessed be God for the Sword that our Captain holds—that out of His mouth there goeth the sharp, two-edged sword: for He speaks and it is done; He utters His word, and out of weakness we are made strong; again He utters it and all our enemies melt away. Having seen Jesus, have we seen also the flashing of the sword of the Spirit? All Holy Scripture that has been written, still cometh out of His mouth in its fulfilment, quick and powerful to do its work, alike by the Blessing and the curse, the Promise and the woe.

Great Prince of Faith, going forth before Thine armies, let Thine "eyes as a flame of fire" kindle all our hearts with holy courage; and hold us by Thine own power, "looking unto Jesus"—till Thou comest "in the clouds of heaven," and we see Thee FACE TO FACE.

* See Ps. xxv'i. 1-4.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH.

“THE PEOPLE PASSED OVER RIGHT AGAINST JERICHO.”—(*Josh.* iii. 16.) “AND THE LORD SAID UNTO JOSHUA, SEE, I HAVE GIVEN INTO THINE HAND JERICHO.”—(*Josh.* vi. 2.)

The time was past for leading the people about, lest they should repent at the sight of war. They had come over Jordan to possess the land, and were thoroughly advised that they must therefore dispossess their enemies. Moreover, it was well for them to learn at the very outset, that their God was able to save them in their sorest straits, and to show Himself stronger than the strongest, that so they might be set free from the fear of every foe. Therefore, even while passing over Jordan, they faced the Fortress, the key to all the Land. Joshua had fully understood its importance, when he sent the two men from Shittim, to view the land, even Jericho. The terror that fell upon that stronghold, might well cause “all the inhabitants of the country to faint,” because of this advancing host. Here, then, the work was to

begin, which was to result in the driving out of seven nations mightier than they. The conquest of this one city forecast the whole campaign.

The question now arises, Wherein do these new enemies differ from those already encountered? Egypt had been their enemy, but God in delivering them from that oppression, had said, "The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever."* Pharaoh and his host, hardly letting the people go, are vivid types of the bondage of this world, and the tyranny of "the god of this world." But, however sore the struggle, or hot the pursuit, God so delivers His own, that henceforth they are "not of the world," nor the "servants of sin." But now follow conflicts of another character. The next encounter of Israel was with Amalek.† This tribe which took its name from the grandson of Esau, cherished all the bitter hatred that sought to avenge a bartered birthright. Its mode of attack, as recounted by Moses, was full of malice. "He met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary."‡ Here is the fitting type of the Flesh, with which name the Scriptures stamp the whole natural man, with his wild and wayward nature. "As then, he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, *even so*

* Ex. xiv. 13.

† Ex. xvii. 8.

‡ Deut. xxv. 18.

it is now."* Only too closely does that stealthy attack of their own kin, in an unguarded moment, resemble those temptations which waylay the soul, when "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak;" when the inward man delights indeed in the law of God, but finds "another law" in this same flesh, warring against him. Only discomfited and held at bay in this attack, Israel was charged to "remember what Amalek did," and when the Lord had given them rest from all other enemies in the land, then they were to "blot out his remembrance from under heaven."† So Moses builded his altar, and "called the name of it *Jehovah Nissi*; for he said, Because the Lord hath sworn, that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."‡ Again and again in the history of the Judges, we find this nomad nation helping to oppress Israel. Saul lost his kingdom because he did not execute the fierce wrath of the Lord against Amalek; while David was established in his, only after he had returned from that slaughter, in which he recovered all that he had lost.§ So that the first foe encountered after their redemption was the last to be utterly subdued.

* Gal. iv. 29. † Deut. xxv. 17-19. ‡ Ex. xvii. 15, 16.

§ 1 Sam. xxx. 19. In this final destruction of Amalek at the setting up of the kingdom, there seems shadowed forth the end of the long warring of the Flesh against the Spirit, in the kingdom of the true David. After all the great distress, and the weeping—"till they had no more power to weep"—David pursued, and recovered all that had been carried captive. "There was nothing

This conflict with Amalek was the only contest up to the time of the Provocation. Immediately after that, when the people attempted to enter the land presumptuously, in their own strength, we find a significant combination of the Amalekites and Canaanites, which resulted in Israel's discomfiture and flight to Hormah * Near the expiration of the forty years, on their return to this same place, the Canaanites "took some of them prisoners." It was then that "Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord," to put all their cities under a ban, as He should deliver them into their hand. After the victory "they called the place Hormah," i. e. "*the banning-place*."† These few contests were *intermediate*.

The next phase of warfare is totally different. Israel is at last prepared to assume the aggressive. We have upon the east of Jordan a sort of rehearsal of the main conquest. "Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon: behold I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land: begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle."‡ Then follows the lacking to them, neither small nor great. . . . *David recovered all.*" So we know that down to the very victory of the grave, Christ will "*without fail* recover all." Also, as at the Exodus, they had spoiled the Egyptians, so here we read of flocks and herds which were driven back with their own, of which they said, "*This is David's spoil.*"

* Num. xiv. 40-45.

† Num. xxi. 1-3. See Keil and Delitzsch.

‡ Deut. ii. 24.

overthrow, so often celebrated in their songs, of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, whose lands became their possession. This was *introductory warfare*.*

Still the main struggle awaited them over Jordan; and the summons was now—"Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven; a people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak!"† Again and again they are mentioned by their names, as "seven nations greater and mightier than thou." Such were the enemies who held the inheritance given to Abraham centuries before, and whom they must now dispossess and destroy. WAR now opens in earnest.

In like manner, the main struggle of the Christian is not found among his earlier experiences. The World and the Flesh may have caused him many a conflict, but what were these compared to the more direct power of the Devil, as he resists with all his combined forces the advancing soul. The Epistle to the Ephesians, which describes most fully our rich spiritual blessings, gives also the strongest statements

* In a small volume entitled "High Truth," by the Rev. R. Aitken [London: Macintosh], there is a very interesting application of this warfare with Sihon and Og. See pp. 60-70.

† Deut. ix. 1, 2.

of this warfare, and the profound nature of it. "Our wrestling is against governments, against powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual armies of wickedness in heavenly places!" It is thus against "the schemes of the Devil" that we are to stand.*

This subject involves some of the profoundest mysteries that surround our being. While naturalism has proudly denied the existence of Satan, even Christendom has largely ignored it. Where the Scriptures speak simply and strongly, and doubtless with the profoundest philosophic truth, of the Devil and of Demons, of their power to bind, and afflict, and oppress—giving us their very numbers—whether one, or seven, or a legion—expressing their fears, which are like no human fears, and their instant knowledge of Christ, with much else that clearly characterized them, how many Christians think of this language as only an accommodation to the superstition of the times. May it not be possible that the pride of Science, and the presumption of Christian Reason, have both of them yet to be humbled, by some substratum of terrible truth glaring through the darkness and deceit of "Spiritualism?"

Very plainly by all the assertions of Revelation, the chief conflict is not between our souls and the *World* that lieth in the Wicked One; nor is it only between the good and evil in our own natures. The

* Eph. vi. 11, 12. (Dean Alford's rendering).

chief contending powers *upon both sides* are supernatural: they are the Spirit of God, and the Prince of the power of the air. The existence of this supernatural region—the fact that the rebellion originated there, and is to be encountered there, even in heavenly places—invests our share in the warfare with the utmost importance. It was another fall, that makes our fall the fearful thing it is; and our susceptibility to influences, reaching us not only from nature, and our fellow-beings, but from other worlds, is the fateful element of all.

For the dominion once allotted to man, and lost through sin, is not unoccupied—it is *usurped*: the active forces of evil are astir over the entire region. One part of that dominion was this earth; but, as the result of this usurpation, we find Creation marred, and its laws disordered, and “*it groaneth*.” We find the same disorder, but still more rife, in the body of man; its sickness and its sufferings, its frequent deformity, and its common shame—these surely are no part of that work which was “very good.” “*An enemy hath done this*.” But the Usurper has seized the intellect of man, and sometimes sinking it below the intelligence of the beasts, has more often stolen the gifts which only God could give, to make them subtle as himself in all evil ends. Again, as no man is a unit by himself, but much of his life the composite life of his race, we behold Society in all its ramifications, from government down to family life, poisoned by this

same Serpent. Hence, the oppression of Rulers, violence and strife among men, malice and fraud, envy and evil-speaking, and the Destroyer pressing closer and closer to the great centres of society—at last man's chief sufferings spring from the very affections which were meant to link him to his kind. The highest civilizations of earth, apart from the Gospel, have left the social relations as they found them, *a wreck*. Finally, the Foe entered the Citadel also, and so seized the noblest part of man—his spirit—as to consign it to very death—so that to regain it he must even be born again.

All this wide dominion which he has usurped, is the dominion to be regained. Whether it be sin, or whether it be sorrow, or whether it be only straitness, the Lord Jesus came to “*destroy the works of the Devil*.” His Gospel announces the final recovery of all that was lost—a time of “restitution of all things,” not only down to the redemption of our body, but the deliverance of Creation also.

But this is not all that the Gospel pledges. To His own Church, Christ will give His own glory. Man in Him is to be made higher than the angels. Our original estate in Adam was blessed, our inheritance vast. But what shall be said of the glory of this?—*this* Hope of our Calling—the riches of glory of our inheritance *in Christ*? Such a result of Redemption as this—

“Greater good because of evil,
Larger mercy through the fall”—

must needs enrage our Adversary to resist to the utmost the purpose of God, and to keep us, if possible, from its realization.

The War of Canaan corresponds to this great contest. Not with the World—not with the Flesh—it is waged directly with the Devil, from whom they derive their power, and who may employ them still as his instruments. Above all it is *aggressive*. We must advance upon “the strong man keeping his palace with his goods in peace.” He cares not to come forth and begin the attack; but so soon as we set our feet upon “the heavenly places,” then comes that onset which St. Paul has described as a wrestling, hand to hand, foot to foot.*

It has been said, that “all the promises of God to His elect take hold of unfathomable mysteries.” And as the natural man can not receive these things, as they can only be spiritually discerned, the first wile of Satan is to keep us from the sight of them. While he wholly blinds the eyes of them that believe not, he succeeds in drawing over the eyes of many a believer, a veil, which so dims these mysteries of Grace, that few suspect what they are missing. For such, the good fight of faith means only defensive warfare.

* Eph. vi. 12. “*πύλη* must be literally taken. It is a hand to hand, and foot to foot ‘tug of war’—that in which the combatants close and wrestle for the mastery.”—*Dean Alford's Greek Test.*

Then he can carry his wiles still further, and so obscure the conscience, that the definition of sin dwindles into deliberate disobedience ; till for the sins of ignorance, and the sins of omission, and the taint of sin through our whole existence, and the tendency to sin in the soul itself, there is no discernment left. Accordingly, many a scheme of so-called Sanctification has been set forth, which resolved Holiness into mere integrity of purpose, and a consciousness which escaped condemnation.

Another wile of Satan, is to make us mistake the field ; to regard the battle before us as chiefly the more visible one, between the children of God, and the children of the Wicked one. It is true we must each take our part in this great contest of the whole Body of Believers ; but to be efficient in this wider warfare, another victory must precede it, won in the secret of the soul. "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city."* It is not first to storm the citadel of stubborn hearts, that our Captain summons us, but to let His banner wave above our own. The work as set before us by the Scriptures is this—"The pulling down of strongholds, casting

* "We may dream that it would be a grand and glorious work, to overcome sin in the world : we may think of sallying out on such an enterprise for the sake of magnifying ourselves by it : all efforts, however, directed towards such an end will be vain, until we have gone through the far more painful and toilsome task of overcoming sin in ourselves."—*Archdeacon Hare's Mission of the Comforter*, p. 202.

down imaginations, and every high tower that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and leading captive every intent of the mind into subjection to Christ." * Such was the victory won by the Apostle Paul in his own spirit, and which he coveted for others. Such is the struggle, or call it rather the victory, that awaits the consecrated and believing soul.

Let us turn now to trace another lesson in those things which "happened unto them for types." We see that as it did not please the Lord to expel their enemies *before* their entrance, so it did not please Him even after it, to expel them *instantaneously*. Each would have been perfectly easy, but would not have accorded with the plan which He had long before announced. It was at Mt. Sinai that He had said—"I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. *By little and little* I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased and inherit the land." † Such is that principle of deepest wisdom which guides the ways of God, and which may be traced throughout His Creation, and throughout His Providence; which is interwoven in all History, and which in the volume of Inspiration, is seen reaching from the lost Eden, to the Paradise of our God. Everywhere with a gracious accommodation of Truth, in itself unchange-

* 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

† Ex. xxiii. 29, 30.

able, is the word spoken unto His people as they are able to bear it. In all things, but most especially in His best things, does our God work on slowly and steadily, but surely, to His great everlasting end. Time in His Eternity, is not the slow thing it is to us, and He builds for Eternity.

Forty years after this announcement of the Divine plan at Sinai, we find Moses repeating it still more explicitly—"The Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee. But the Lord Thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed. And He shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven; there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them."* Three points are to be noted in this promise :

I. God would drive them out by *little and little*.

II. This was to *end* in a *mighty destruction*.

III. *Meantime* His people should be *constant victors*.

As regards the first point, it is clear that this gradual conquest in no way resulted from Israel's unbelief, but was the original plan of God. Not in one year, He had said, would He drive out before them these old inhabitants; and we gather from the history that it

* Deut. vii. 22-24.

was seven years before the land "rested from war. * If the inference be correct, it was a year for a nation that was needed. As their enemies represented in their very number the completeness of strength, so may the number of the years, the full course of time.

There was a "needs be" in the thoughts of God for this "little and little." Their enemies were not to diminish too rapidly in proportion to their own increase. Unless for each man driven out, there were found an Israelite to fill his place, then something worse than a man would take it—"the beasts of the field." Even so our Lord has taught us that when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, and finds upon his return to his house, that however swept and garnished, it is *empty*, with no master to defend it, he not only enters himself, but takes with him seven other still more wicked spirits: "*and the last state of that man is worse than the first.*" †

Yet it is a lesson which the world is slow in learning, that to rescue any part of our being, any of our

* "Joshua made war with the kings of Canaan a long time judging from chap. xiv. 7, 10, as much as seven years, though Josephus Ant. v. 1, 19, speaks of five. From the words, 'The Lord hath kept me alive these forty-five years,' Theodoret justly infers that the conquest of Canaan by Joshua was completed in seven years, since God spake these words towards the end of the second year after the exodus from Egypt, and, therefore, thirty-eight years before the entrance into Canaan."—*Krit and Delitzsch on Joshua*, pp. 123, 149.

† Matt. xii. 43-45.

faculties and powers from the service of sin, without having them at once occupied by the Spirit, is to expose ourselves to still worse danger. Such energy of evil in filling all vacant spaces, might perhaps go far to explain the sudden lapse of God's servants into some great sin, which now and then startles the Church. St. Paul has sketched for us in one of his own strong antitheses the safe procedure—"As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity ; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.* He could not counsel any *putting off* of the old man, apart from the *putting on* of the new.

But secondly, although the conquest was a work of time, there was to be a limit to it. The history abundantly confirms the promise of a mighty destruction. In the eleventh and twelfth chapters of Joshua, we have the statistics and summary of the war—"All the kings were thirty and one ;"—"Joshua made war a long time with all those kings ;"—"So Joshua took the whole land ;"—"And the land rested from war." The "until" of the promise was no endless chain ; the warfare was as sure to be *limited* as it was to be *by little and little*.

And so also read the promises of victory which the Gospel gives to us. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet *shortly* ;"† "The God of all grace who hath called us unto His eternal glory by

* Rom. vi. 19.

† Rom. xvi. 20.

Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered *awhile*, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”* And with this promise, the experience of some, at least, agreed. The beloved disciple wrote to young men, in terms which show plainly that a whole life is not required for victory—“I have written unto you, young men, because *ye are strong*, and the word of God abideth in you, and *ye have overcome the wicked one*.”† That in the experience of many, the land *never* rests from war, except now and then to enjoy some brief Truce of God, is to be charged solely to their unfaithfulness, and by no means to His purpose. The subsequent history proves, however, that this rest was no immunity from danger apart from their fidelity; and that subject remnants of their enemies in their own borders, or hostile fugitives without, were capable of becoming at any moment, snares, and traps, and scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes.‡

The third point to note in this Promise of God, that *meantime* His people should be *constant victors*, is the most important of all—“There shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have de-

* 1 Pet. v. 10.

† 1 John ii. 14. Of course this does not apply to that fullest sense of the Conquest which is realized only in the Resurrection; nor yet to the Conquest set before the entire Church. In regard to the latter a most interesting parallel exists between the seven nations of Canaan and the seven conquests of the seven churches in the Revelation.

‡ Josh. xxiii. 13.

stroyed them." In all those years of warfare, it is a striking fact that, with the exception of the defeat at Ai, where they justly forfeited the promise, we are not told of the loss of a single man, nor of any even temporary defeat. Even if we can not positively assume that these were bloodless victories on their side, we have here at least one of the significant silences of Holy Scripture. The career of Israel in Canaan was a career of continual conquest.

And herein it is that the good fight of Faith differs from the contest that is all too common; for a continued conflict being admitted even in this case, it might be asked, Where then is the advantage? It is this, the advantage of constant victory over frequent defeat; for a constant victory it will be if we keep the faith. Never yet did the Captain of the host of the Lord lose a single battle. Nay, more, the good soldier of Christ Jesus learns to welcome the sight of his enemies, knowing that it really means *larger possessions*; learns to "count it all joy, when he falls into divers temptations," knowing that it means completer triumph. Of that old warfare in Canaan, it stands written, "*It was of the Lord* to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor." * Even so, *it is of the Lord* that the evil hitherto lying latent in our nature should be discerned; it is of the Lord that the trials even

* Josh. xi. 20.

league themselves together; for it is that the evil may be dislodged and destroyed, and that the dominion of Grace may be enlarged.

While the good Fight of Faith may be regarded as almost synonymous with the work of Sanctification, it may be well to trace the application of these lessons more definitely under that head. The word *Sanctification* (ἁγιασμός), which occurs only ten times in the New Testament, is rendered in half that number by another word in our version—*Holiness*. So again, it is simply the same allied term (ἅγιος), which is rendered *holy* and *saint*, as is the corresponding verb (ἁγιάζω) by *hallow* and *sanctify*. But none of them appear, from their context, to be held to a single fixed meaning. Christians are addressed as saints, and epistles are written to the sanctified, when they were evidently far from being in a state of practical purity. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find a key to the right understanding of this; where first we read — “*We have been sanctified*, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all;” * and very soon after this, “For by one offering, He hath perfected forever them *who are being sanctified*.” † So then *He hath sanctified*, while *we are being sanctified*. *He hath perfected*, while we are going on *unto perfection*. The “*once-for-all-ness*,” marked the power of Christ’s Cross; while our practical partaking of it, is plainly *a process*. But everywhere, the ultimate standard

* Heb. x. 10.

† Heb. x. 14.

even of this, is to be "sanctified wholly," and to "perfect holiness."

Those who claim that entire sanctification is to be instantaneously received, would appear to confound the two uses of the word. In its highest sense, as wrought out by the Sanctifier, and so imputed by the Head of the Body to all its members, it must be *entire*; but such a word can not be used of a process which is still going on.

Growth in Grace is put under the condition of all growth—demanding time. Nor do the Scriptures speak of any state of entire purity, *from* which we grow on into maturity. It is the purity itself, which is to mature, as St. John tells us, that every man that hath the blessed hope of seeing Jesus as He is, *puri-fieth* himself, even as He is pure. He plainly speaks of a continuous work, with which the constant exhortations of all the Apostles agree. They give us no single precept, enjoining any such sudden attainment; and they leave no record of any such experience. It is noticeable that those who claim such entire sanctification as a present experience, are always obliged to limit it in other ways, as extending only to the Affections, to the Will, or to "the essence of the soul," and thus they deprive themselves of the proper term for expressing its practical completeness. As to another limit which has been often set—our consciousness—an Apostle has given us some solemn thoughts on that head—"I am conscious to myself of no delin-

quency; but I am not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord." * It is true, that only the evil which comes within the range of our consciousness, can be overcome; but our responsibility extends far beyond this, and includes the most diligent cultivation of the conscience.

As great confusion of thought has thus arisen from the inaccurate use of the word Sanctification, so has still more confusion sprung from loose and unscriptural definitions of sin. The Scriptures give us three—ranging from the negative to the positive, from the lowest to the highest estimate of it. For as we grow more spiritual we grow more sensitive to sin. Our perception of it will advance very much in the order of these definitions.

I. "Sin is the *transgression* of the Law."

II. "All *unrighteousness* is sin."

III. "Whatsoever is *not of faith* is sin."

We are first convicted of special acts of sin. Then we become troubled at the absence of positive righteousness; and it is the *sin in our nature* that we recognize. Finally, we advance to the full meaning of sin, taught in the very word itself—*i. e., missing the mark*. Wherever we see ourselves not yet transformed by this renewal of our minds, whatever it be that is still unlike our Lord, whatever deed or word or thought reaches not high enough as yet, for the holy harmony of doing God's will on earth as it is

* 1 Cor. iv. 4.

done in heaven, that to the cultivated conscience, coming to share His thought in all things, even that is now our sin.

Another nice distinction is drawn in the Word of God between sin and temptation. It is often claimed, under the system already referred to, that the very "roots of evil are so eradicated" in that "instantaneous sanctification," that temptation comes to the saint, as to his Saviour, "solely from without." Yet it is to saints that the Apostle James writes: "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of *his own lust*, and enticed."* But then how carefully he goes on to show, that this outcome of our own nature is not counted by the Lord as sin, till it is further developed. "Then lust, having conceived, bringeth forth sin."† Only the consent of our will turns temptation into sin.

A like distinction is drawn between our confession of sin, and our condemnation for it. As to the condemnation for sin, God is graciously pleased to own our renewed will, and to disown our old nature—allowing us to take the same view. "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."‡ "There is *no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus."§ And yet His Holy Spirit must convict us even of the sin which dwelleth in us, and the lust that enticeth us; even their presence in us calls for a

* Jas. i. 14.

† Jas. i. 15.

‡ Rom. vii. 17.

§ Rom. viii. 1.

Deliverer. There must be, upon our side, a hearty *confession* of them as they come to light—a fresh claiming of the cleansing of the blood of Christ, and then a going forward in His name to their *conquest*. We are told by St. Paul that if we would thus “*discern* ourselves, we should not be condemned.”* This discerning in the light of the Spirit will bring to view not merely temptation, but also our neglected duties, our careless ways, our unsanctified habits, our neglected privileges. These will seem set before us as enemies, many and mighty, to be overcome. And along with these we must constantly consider our sins of ignorance as calling for both confession and conquest. “Though he wist it not, yet is he guilty,”† is the plain decree of justice—to be met only by the decree of Mercy—“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”‡ Our career in the conquest of the Land of promise, may therefore be regarded as a constant discerning of ourselves—a constant coming to the Light, that must still convince, though it be not to condemn, and so a constant overcoming by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of our testimony.

And thus the Christian who has not yet in a practical sense been sanctified wholly, may in the meantime be “preserved *blameless*.” Such a distinction is clearly presented in the Scriptures. “The very God

* 1 Cor. xi. 31.

† Lev. v. 17.

‡ 1 John i. 9.

of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be *preserved blameless* unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.”* So St. Paul prays. But the Apostle Jude goes further still, and commends the sanctified, and “preserved in Jesus Christ,” “unto Him that is able to keep them from falling, and to present them *faultless* before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”† So then we may be *blameless* without being *faultless*: we are to be blameless *now*: we shall be faultless *hereafter*: — “*preserved* blameless,” and “*presented* faultless.” Such is the blessed and glorious ideal which is set before the Christian, and which both the ability and faithfulness of God are pledged to make real. If it be asked what practical difference there is in such a distinction, we may take as an example a little child whose loving heart is bent upon pleasing her mother. Her first little task of needlework is put into her hands. But the little fingers are all unskilled, nor has she any thought of the nicety required; still, with intense pleasure she sets stitch after stitch, until at last she brings it to her mother; she has done her best, and does not dream of failure. And the mother taking it, sees two things:—one is a work as faulty as it well can be, with stitches long and crooked; and the other is that smiling, upturned face with its sweet consciousness of love. Not for anything could

* 1 Thess. v. 23, 24.

† Jude 24.

she coldly criticise that work. She thinks of the effort to please, and how little she could expect in a first attempt. It is the child's best for the time being. So she commends her, and even praises the poor, imperfect work, and then gently and most lovingly shows her how she may do still better. The child is blameless, but her work not faultless. It will be nearer and nearer faultless, as day after day she gathers skill, and even new ideas of care and faithfulness in her tasks; but still in her mother's eyes she is at first, as well as at last, her blameless child. And surely every believing, loving child of God, may regard this blessing of blamelessness, not as one to be finally reached, but as one to enjoy all along the way. Only in this case, there will be not only a life more and more holy, but a heart growing purer and purer in its love. And precious beyond all price will it be day after day of our lives, to hear again and again, our Father's acceptance of our work and of ourselves. "Blameless, my child—still blameless." And yet such a child can not aim at less than His entire approval. He will not abuse such a comfort, or count it the chief thing; but ever seeing more fully the vast importance of all his Father's interests, and His earnest desire to make him a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, he will even beseech Him not to spare His correction, but to show him faithfully every fault.

Such a distinction as this provides for perfect peace

with God, but not for any profession of perfection. Such a claim as this, not covering the defects of which we are yet unconscious, nor the conquest which may still be incomplete, does not suggest, as in the case of other claims, a painful sense of discrepancy between profession and possession. Such a claim, as it leaves no room for discouragement, allows none for presumption. It is calm and confident, but very humble. It keeps its eye on Christ, and the power of His resurrection, and it speaks soberly—"Not that I have already won, or am already perfect; but I press onward—if indeed I might lay hold on that, for which Christ also laid hold on me: I count not myself to have laid hold thereon; but this one thing I do—*forgetting* that which is behind, and reaching forth to that which is before, *I press onward*, towards the mark, for the prize of God's heavenly calling in Christ Jesus."* This is its experience, and its simple exhortation is—"Let us all, then, who are ripe in understanding, be thus minded."†

So pass we onward, then, unto *our* conquest; little by little to drive out our enemies, but still to always win our battles, always to overcome; and even when we reach a rest from the long war, still to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation; and still ever more fully to possess the land.

As to the manner of the Conquest, the secret of victory is so simple, that a few words may set it forth.

* Phil. iii. 12-14. † Phil. iii. 15.—As rendered by Conybeare.

It is clearly shown in the capture of the first city: "By *faith* the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days."* In fact, the victory was won before they even began—"See, I *have given* into thine hand Jericho." Day after day their faith was disciplined and developed, and patience also had her perfect work, till at last came the command, "Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city." "It was the shout of Faith, that saw not and yet believed; and that, having believed, at once saw the glory of God."

For us also the real battle has been fought, and we can claim an accomplished victory. "Be of good courage," said Jesus, "*I have overcome the world:*" and now "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."† The prince of all these powers of evil was met by Him in single combat—and this was the issue: "The prince of this world is judged:" "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."‡ The Serpent's head was bruised. Satan is the Saviour's vanquished foe, with not a particle of actual power to assert against Him in *His* kingdom, mighty as he is in his own. And for us also whose life is in Christ, he is a conquered foe—with not a particle of power to send one of his darts through the shield of faith. But his chief strategy lies in concealing this—in presenting an unbroken front. He would make us be-

* Heb. xi. 30.

† 1 John v. 4.

‡ John xii. 31.

lieve that we have still as hard a battle to fight, as though Christ had not fought for us. We are charged, indeed, not to be ignorant of his devices—we are to put on the whole armor of God—but so going forth we shall never find a wall so high and strong, that it shall not fall down flat at the shout of our Faith. We may make war a very long time, and manifold may be our enemies; but the way is the same throughout. Whatever God charges us to do, whether it seem to be much or little, the Heavenly Captain and His host win all our victories.

What shall be said, then, of that precious Faith which our Lord has given us, and endowed with such a power? Faith sees the Land—Faith prepares itself—Faith passes over—Faith goes from strength to strength—Faith waxes valiant in fight—Faith has an eye ever on the Captain, to follow Him whithersoever He goeth—Faith ever listens, for it has received its charge, “Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it”—Faith never needs to measure walls, or count the giants—Faith sees nothing but the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe—Faith ponders day and night the exceeding great and precious promises—Faith is ever saying, “*We are well able to overcome!*” and Faith ever hears God saying, “HE THAT OVERCOMETH SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS.”

CHAPTER XIII.

FAILURE AND MISTAKE.

“THERE IS AN ACCURSED THING IN THE MIDST OF THEE, O ISRAEL: THOU CANST NOT STAND BEFORE THINE ENEMIES, UNTIL YE TAKE AWAY THE ACCURSED THING FROM AMONG YOU.”—(*Josh.* vii. 13.)

“THE MEN TOOK OF THEIR VICTUALS, AND ASKED NOT COUNSEL AT THE MOUTH OF THE LORD.”—(*Josh.* ix. 14.)

The Book of Joshua contains the record of but one lost battle: only once does it number the slain of Israel. This defeat followed close upon their first great victory. Their holy confidence in God sank quickly into an unhallowed confidence in themselves: Jericho had fallen—what need to put forth all their strength against Ai?

Thus do our greatest failures often happen in the little things of life. We miscalculate the strength of the foe; we fail to spy out the reserved forces. Indeed, we mistake, when we think it an easy matter to subdue *any* enemy. How often has it happened, that he who has won his signal victory in some great crisis

of the Church, who has rescued the Truth from the teachers of false doctrine, or stormed the entrenchments of Vice, has forthwith failed in some petty domestic disturbance, in some simple social duty, or in a trifling claim of common charity. If there be a time in life when we need more than ever to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation, it is the hour of success.

The discouragement, verging upon despair, which followed the flight from Ai, shows how the ground of faith had been deserted. "The hearts of the people melted, and became as water." * Even Joshua, with his clothes rent, and dust upon his head, lies flat upon his face, and gives himself over to the strange regret—"Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!" †

Who has ever overcome without an Ai?—a question of *fact* to be carefully distinguished from the question of *necessity*. And with whom has it not been their first temptation, to regard with impatience their further ventures upon faith?—as though God really left us at liberty to be content with lower things, when there are higher set before us!

But still more overwhelming to Joshua was the sense of Israel's dishonor, as compromising the name of God. "O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! . . . , and what wilt Thou do unto Thy great name?" ‡

* Josh. vii. 5.

† Josh. vii. 7.

‡ Josh. vii. 8, 9.

And what shall any of us think, or say, when we find that after all the development and discipline of faith, the failure comes? Shall we charge God with it, as not having provided against it? Shall we still lie flat upon our faces, as the sorrow glooms into sullenness?

Nothing more thoroughly tests our loyalty to God, and our regard to His honor instead of our own, than our readiness to receive the chastening by which He must judge us, when we do not "*discern ourselves*."* As surely as the cause of failure is always found with us, so surely is there a remedy with God. "Israel hath sinned—*therefore*, the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed thing from among you."† Thus did the Lord make a clear case of this mysterious dispensation. By His decree the whole spoil of war was His: all treasure was "*devoted*" to Him; perverted to their own use, it was the "*accursed*" thing.‡ It was the accursed use of good things that was their sin.

Thus does the Lord hold His children true unto Himself; He compels them to let Him search out all hidden, hindering things, as their only way to victory. Their short suffering is as nothing to this necessity. Their own sense of shame, and even the taunts of their enemies, are little things in His eyes,

* 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.

† Josh. vii. 11, 12.

‡ The same word is rendered in our version by both *devoted* and *accursed*.

compared with the deeper evil. He must teach them that they can not serve Him in one sphere, and take their own way in another. Any secret using of His treasures, apart from His will and blessing, they must understand to be sin. Achan had marched around Jericho, and had shouted in that great shout of faith: in such great matters he could be true to God;—but the mantle, and the gold and silver, why should he not have these to enjoy?

Christianity in this nineteenth century since Christ came, has not outgrown the same gross form of temptation that was the snare of Israel fifteen centuries before—"the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." There is surely no more crying sin to be found among the daughters of the Lord, than their love of display in these "goodly Babylonish garments." Beyond all that is allowed for comfort, and comeliness, how much is coveted for mere display. The evil is in the heart, and not in the garment. That mantle of old belonged by right to the Lord; it was treasure even in His sight, and He could have called upon some one to wear it, even to His glory. But Achan could not—the covetous, the proud, the selfish, never can; they are not pure enough in heart, to take as pure, that pattern their Creator set them, when He clothed the lilies of the field in all their glory. True, there are other bearings of this subject—growing out of the present disorder of the world—touching the toil and strain enforced upon the heads of families—

touching the needs of the poor and of Christ's cause—touching the example set for the weak and thoughtless—touching also great moral questions upon which social happiness and purity depend—but these are as the husk to this fatal seed of evil. The vital germ is “the lust of the eye”—lust seeking to gratify self, where love should be glorifying God!

Again, there is no more crying sin among the sons of God, than that “love of money” which is “the root of all evil.” Wealth held in trust for the Lord, kept as a devoted thing, is not only a blessing, but a very necessity in the perfect plan of His providence. But gold apart from God, hankered after through the pride of life, is still the accursed thing in thy midst, O Israel! Once, it was only a single garment, and a few pieces of gold and silver, in the tent of one man. Is it the less a sin now, that men do it upon a grand scale, and that there is little hiding of the matter? What marvel that God goeth not forth with our armies!

And when we remember that these two forms of sin—“the lust of the eye, and the pride of life”—extend to “all that is in the world,” and so class with them all that they really represent—when we think of God's claim over all things, and of all our persistent and varied robbery of His dues, with what fearful force does the charge come home to us in our own day—“There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine

enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you." Alas, that so dear is this accursed thing to many, that upon the whole, they choose defeat, rather than to confess the sin, and let this offending Achan of lust be stoned with stones, and burned with fire.

Another most important lesson lies in the fact, that the sin of *one* involved *all*. Such a law of organic spiritual life is very clearly stated by St. Paul—"Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."* There can plainly, then, be no individual perfection, till the whole Body is perfected. Hence Love, with all its tender care one for another, is the vital thing it is. The sin and shortcoming of one single member, are the suffering and the loss of all the other members. God honors to the utmost the faith and devotion of each; but there are heights to which they can not attain, save with the help of all. Even if the cloven tongue of some Pentecostal gift were to alight upon the chosen of the Spirit, yet if it met no kindred spark—if it fell only upon the damp and chill of unbelief—how surely would it expire, with only a brief and ineffectual gleam.

The sin of Achan—unknown as it was to all but himself, and his God, yet troubling a nation—teaches us to trace the evil to something more secret than mere example. What a study for the thoughtful is

* 1 Cor. xii. 26.

this strange sympathy of soul ! What a solution of many a problem ! And how does such a law render sin exceeding sinful. Each offence is not only against God, and to the injury of our own life, but tells upon the life and vigor of the whole Church of Christ. Like the healthful body, it may be able to heal the wound, or throw off the disease of one part by the rallying of the rest ; but at best there is an expenditure of force that is needed elsewhere. Every sin is in its essence the failure to love God, and to love our brother also. All covetousness is idolatry, and all selfishness a stab at the life of some one. He that hateth his brother *is a murderer*—not in intent, but act—as truly strikes by his hatred the life of his spirit, as a murderer slays the body. What a responsibility is ours, therefore, when we see our brother sin—not only to rebuke in faithful love, but to ask that God will give him life again ; seeing that it is not only his life, but our life also, and the life of Christ's own Body.

Among all the rich promises that spring from God's forgiving and restoring love, there are few more wonderful than this—that He has given us “the Valley of Achor for a door of hope.”* From that valley, which they so named from their sore “trouble,” Joshua and the people rose up ; and soon before his spear, outstretched towards that same Ai from which they lately fled, twelve thousand of their enemies melted away, even all the inhabitants of the place ;

* Hos. ii. 15.

and fear fell on all who heard it. The one failure was never repeated ; and the six and thirty men who fell at Ai, give us the only death list of a seven years' war.

When once we have added to our experience of God's favor as shown to the willing and obedient, that of His faithfulness even in our failure, we come up from this dark passage of our trouble and loss, to a door that opens wide upon His great Love. We gather even cheer from the certainty, that the Lord will cleanse us from secret faults. For sin, to a loving child of God, is a more fearful thing than any suffering for sin. Welcome, then, shall be the discipline, that put us on the track of its discovery ; for so soon as we see it, we are met by this faithful word —“ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” How often does it happen in our experience, that some one form of trial is strangely reiterated, until we are tempted to regard it as our fate. Is it not rather the voice of the Lord, calling to us again and again, until we heed Him, and learn the lesson He has set us? When we have learned it, He will no more repeat the trial. We learn, moreover, from such an experience as this, to *anticipate* His correction, and not compel Him to chasten us Himself. Very weighty is that lesson of St. Paul, and given to us in words most fitly chosen* (sadly as they

* 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.

are marred in our version)—that if we would duly *discern ourselves*—before any doubtful deed—we should have no occasion to be *judged* after it. But that failing in this, even our judgment is only the chastening of the Lord, that we should not come to be *condemned* with the world. So, then, the Lord does not purpose to lead us into any valley of Achor, but if we fall into the snare, He provides a way to recover ourselves from it—giving us even there a door of hope. The two chapters occupied by this narrative, are followed by a third, which gives us, not indeed another failure, but a great mistake.

The people lean now to their own understanding, as just before they relied upon their own strength. The foe fearing to come out longer in open battle, approaches them with deceit. Long before, the Gibeonites had learned to their cost, from Simeon and Levi, a fearful lesson of dishonorable strategy.* Doubtless it was this that suggested a sort of retaliation, which God permitted as a sure retribution. “They did work wilily.” Feigning to come from a far country, they entrapped Israel into a friendly league. So clear appeared the case, that “the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.” How much erring in judgment is foreshadowed in this simple incident. The instances are comparatively few where the Christian fails and flees before a recognized enemy; in by far the greater

* Gen. xxxiv.

number he goes astray through the deceitfulness of sin.* There was but one Achan, who hearing God's command about the dedicated things, went and hid them in his tent; but Joshua and all Israel were caught in the snare of the Gibeonites. No warning voice from God came to arrest them, for they had neglected to seek His counsel, and they must learn the peril of it.

It is often carelessly said, that if we do the best we know how to do—acting up to the light we have—we are guiltless.

Such a maxim is not allowed to pass in earthly matters. The Captain who doing the best he can at the time, runs his ship upon a rock well known to seamen, is held responsible for his ignorance. We are not only to act up to the light we have, but to *seek* the light and *come* to the light. *Sincerity* may never dare to claim the same high reward that is given to *Truth*, nor are the immunities of the one like the immunities of the other. For every portion of the full and rounded Truth of God that is missed even by mistaken judgment, some loss is inevitable; and who shall venture to estimate the aggregate of that loss to the Church of Christ from the multitude of her mistakes, both in doctrine and in practice?

* Farrar speaks of Judas even as half concealing from himself the grossness of his own motives, and adds: "People rarely sin under the full glare of self-consciousness; they usually blind themselves with false pretexts and specious motives."—*Farrar's Life of Christ*, Vol. II., p. 192.

One gleam of comfort, however, we are permitted to gather from the old story of the Gibeonites. Inexcusable as was their neglect to seek His counsel, God graciously brought out of the evil, somewhat of blessing. These deceivers of His people should henceforth be their hewers of wood, and drawers of water;—some compensation should be found for what they had lost. In the wonderful amends of Grace—even in missing the highest mark—the Lord can surely put the mistakes of His children among the all things that work together for good to them that love Him.

But far more edifying than to enumerate such mistakes, will it be to consider the provision that is made against them.

Distinct promises of God have pledged to every seeking soul His light, and truth, and wisdom. “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” “When the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into the whole truth.”—“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”* Very plainly, then, must our mistakes originate like that of Israel—“We ask not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.” The contrary of this is, however, most commonly claimed—“We *did* seek it.” Ah, but did you not first “take of the victuals?” That which is often asked of God, is not so much His will and way, as His approval of our way. It is

* Matt. vi. 22; John xvi. 13; Jas. i. 5.

remarkable how little perplexity as to their duty, appears among the saints of the Bible. Especially in the Epistles, we find scarcely a trace of uncertainty as to the way which they should take. But in our own day, how common is the cry that men "walk in darkness and have no light." We have no right to remain in that darkness. If we love the light, we shall find the light. If the windows of my dwelling-place be closed with blinds of ignorance, they must first be thrown open. If the curtain of prejudice be drawn closely down, it must next be put aside. If the thin shade of conceit be left, there is still more to do—for though I may now have the sunlight, I have not the *sunshine*. If this shade be lifted, and yet the window be obscured with frost, or dust, or even so thin a film as my own breath, I can not have a clear vision of that which lies beyond it. My apathy is that frost—my carelessness that dust—my selfishness that film. I must look if possible with nothing between me and the truth, or if I must look through glass, let it be so clear as to be itself invisible. But instead of seeking thus until we find, do we not hastily take our clew from custom, and changing conventionalities, and from human opinion? It is well-known that the Red man who fears the approach of the foe, does not listen through the air, where so many sounds are stirring, but presses his ear close to his mother-earth, and so hears afar off the stealthiest tread. So does our ear in its distraction need to list-

en, shut off from common channels, and holding itself fast by that Word of truth, which is the choice conductor of the will of God.

It is a prime condition of such wisdom that we have a certain affinity with the truth, as a ground of receptivity—"He that is *of the truth*," said the Lord Jesus, "heareth my voice." When the secret attractions of the soul are false to God, there can be no real counsel asked of Him.

Again, the first step towards knowledge is the confession of our ignorance. The human understanding wholly fails in heavenly things.—It is Love that is the great illuminator.—"If any man think that he *understandeth* anything, he *knoweth* nothing yet *as he ought to know*. But if any man love God, the same is *known of Him*."* In His own knowing of us, all our knowledge originates; first of Himself, then of all things. Closely akin to the conceit of our own understanding, a veritable Gibeonite in its clouted shoes, and equal to deceiving even a Joshua, is that habit of *self*-examination which is so often practiced. As though the heart were not deceitful above all things, we assume the ability to discover its depths, and to analyze its mixture of motives. That is a work for God alone. There lies a world-wide space between the old Delphian oracle—"Know thyself,"—and that wisdom that coming from above teaches us to cry, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart!*"

* 1 Cor. viii. 2, 3.

Another all-important condition of our protection from error, is that we should seek not only counsel, but the close companionship of *the Counsellor*. We are directed not to a mere written word of wisdom, but to a Wisdom who walks among men; not to the bare letter of any law, but to a Living Law that has come down to lead us safely. Listen to that Voice that in due time becomes the Incarnate Word—“Counsel is mine and sound wisdom. *I am understanding. I have strength.* Blessed is the man that heareth me, *watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.*”* Listen as it calls again to still closer intimacy,—“When thou walkest, let it guide thee; when thou liest down, let it guard thee; and at thy waking, let it talk with thee.”†

Our need is so constant and so varied, that only the Spirit of God can supply us with wisdom. In so guiding us He will make His own Word our lamp wherever that is possible. Where it is not, He will point out some other way. His own Word itself again and again throws us back upon this immediate guidance of the Spirit. For how many are the emergencies of life, concerning which that Word is silent, and can no more answer us than it could have told the Camp of Israel from what country came the Gibeonites. Therefore, while God put His holy Law in the Ark of the Covenant, He put His Urim also in the Breast-Plate of the High Priest; and so flashed from time to time

* Prov. viii. 14, 34.

† Prov. vi. 22.

the guiding ray upon the perplexities of His people. Moreover, how many messages, for the man, and for the moment, did His Prophets carry from His mouth. All this He gave before the great day of Pentecost. How "the Holy Ghost spake" thenceforth, how He taught and counselled, is proved by almost every page of that "second treatise" in which St. Luke, who had written in a former the Gospel of Jesus Christ, gave next, the Gospel of His Holy Ghost.

But it is the thought of some that while such a provision indeed exists, yet such is our weakness, that practically it avails but little—that while so many have sought such guidance, and forthwith fallen into dangerous delusions, it is much safer to forego it, and to keep closely by the Word of God. No such substitution is possible; and if we thus slight the Spirit, we do dishonor to some of the strongest sayings of Holy Scripture, and forfeit utterly a priceless privilege.

For the Lord has not mocked us by first promising that He would speak to us with His own Voice, and then failing to provide the hearing ear. Indeed, the very pith of the promise, is this accuracy in knowing His Voice. He does not say, as some would seem to suppose, "I will go before My sheep—I will call very clearly to them to follow Me, but the foolish sheep will not be able to understand Me"—but this is what He says of the True Shepherd, "The sheep follow Him *for they know His voice*. And a stranger

will they not follow, but will flee from him : for they know not the voice of strangers.”*

And yet we can not ignore the fact, that many and even monstrous have been the mistakes of those who claimed to know His voice. But one solution of this seems at all satisfactory. They have never been trained by holy familiarity to *really* know it. We learn to distinguish human voices with perfect accuracy; and not only so, but their slightest changes can convey the most delicate shades of thought and feeling to the well-trained ear. Our spiritual senses are not less sure, but they also require their training. The little babe as it first begins this great art of listening, can not tell a human voice from any other sound; but soon in the darkest midnight one voice is unmistakable. So the wife, sitting it may be in the twilight, hears a step along the hall, and then a voice, that can be no other than his for whom she has been waiting. But if as she rises, saying confidently—“It is my husband”—you ask her how she knows that voice, what can she do but smile and say simply, but more surely, “*I know it!*” She can not give you the secret; nor could you ever learn it, save as she has learned it. Apart from being much with Christ, above all apart from loving Him, we can not know His voice. But so loving, so following closely, we have His own sure promise that the stranger can never deceive us; though

* John x. 4, 5.

the hands that touch us seem the very hands of Esau, yet we shall know that the voice is indeed the voice of Jacob.

Any difficulties which may still be attached to this privilege, are not beyond the difficulties of all spiritual attainments, and however impossible with men, perfectly possible with God. So that we are without excuse as the flock of God, if we do not clearly know our Shepherd's Voice; and *therefore* know the wiles of Satan. His devices are so many, and even when old, putting on such new disguises, that had we to learn them one by one, we should never feel secure. But to know *One Voice* with certainty, solves in the simplest possible manner the entire difficulty: if it be the voice of any stranger, we know that we must not listen. We must not even listen to him who comes to accuse us of sin, if still it be the voice of a stranger, and not the voice of our Beloved. Satan is the great Accuser: he accuses us before God, and he accuses us to our own hearts—sometimes justly, as well as unjustly; but in no case have we any right to parley with him at all. We are not even to learn about our sins from Satan; for he comes that he may drag us down if possible, to discouragement and despair. The reproofs of Him who loves us are entirely faithful; only we may be very sure that when He has somewhat against us, He will not send Satan as His messenger to say so, but will correct us Himself, with His

own loving correction—cleansing and healing, even while He chastens us.

But the Spirit has other ways of guidance than by His voice. "I will guide thee with Mine eye."* As the eye speaks more swiftly than the lips, so can it speak more sweetly, or more severely. The quick glance gathers His sanction—"approved of Christ," or if need be that He turn and look upon us, His silent reproof sends us out, like Peter, to weep bitterly.

Again we are told of another spiritual sense:—Isaiah prophesied of Christ that the Spirit of the Lord should rest upon Him, and make Him "of quick understanding."† The root from which this word is taken, and still more plainly, the context, show us what is signified. The "sight of His eyes," and the "hearing of His ears," were not enough—not even by these would He judge; but by another sense more subtle, swift, and sure—even as when He "smelled a sweet savor" from Noah's altar and the cleansed earth. How much of our outward protection from danger is left to this sense of smell, as the keenest and readiest of all. Everything may be fair and beautiful to the eye, but as the sickening effluvia is wafted to us, we flee as from a pestilence. The Holy Spirit resting upon us, we shall become like Christ, of that "quick understanding" which will prove one of our chief securities from evil. The odor of false doctrine can not escape us, and the very

* Ps. xxxii. 8.

† Is. xi. 3.

scent of sin will keep us from its touch; while we turn in all haste to Him, all whose garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia.

The combined result of all this training is given us by St. Paul in one of those delicate touches, which he knew so well where to put upon his great landscapes of Truth: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment" (*Ἀισθησις*).* The word which he uses here stands quite alone in the Bible, and denotes a sphere of judgment beyond its common range. St. Paul teaches us that there are *Spiritual Æsthetics*: that besides knowledge, there is a nice perception, a ready tact, a quick sense of the proprieties and fitnesses of things, so important for us as to be the proper object of most earnest prayer. He who could not call His outward creation good, till He had woven in the wondrous woof with His swift shuttles of Light and Sound, can surely give to none of us this testimony, "that we please Him," till He has trained us to a like harmony—until in our souls can be seen the mellow toning of all the tints of truth, and from our lives be heard the rhythm of all holy works and ways.

The perfect provision of our Lord, allows plainly, no liberty for the life that is risen in Him, to be a failure, or to be marred even with mistakes—allows even no liberty for terror, or anxious fear of these. Child of God, dwelling in the secret place of the

* Phil. i. 9.

Most High, thou canst not be afraid! A thousand may fall at thy side, or even ten thousand at thy right hand, but—"Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence." And not only so, but the same loving care extending to the slightest of thy steps, "He shall give His angels charge over thee *to keep thee in all thy ways*. They shall bear thee up in their hands lest thou trip thy foot against a stone." For all thy need of His strength, "His truth shall be thy shield and buckler;" and for all thy need of His tenderness, "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust"

CHAPTER XIV.

CHOICE POSSESSIONS.

“THERE REMAINETH YET VERY MUCH LAND TO
BE POSSESSED.”—(*Josh.* xiii. 1.)

“HOW LONG ARE YE SLACK TO GO TO POSSESS
THE LAND WHICH THE LORD GOD OF YOUR FA-
THERS HATH GIVEN YOU?”—(*Josh.* xviii. 3.)

With the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Joshua we enter another section, which treats of the division of the land of Canaan, as the former treated of its conquest. The distribution of the country, varying widely as it did in natural advantages, and, therefore, sure to tell strongly upon the future character of the Tribes, was too important to be left to human decision. The Lord Himself had a choice for each. His plan for His people was as perfect in all its details, as it was grand and comprehensive. The charge respecting this division ran thus: “Ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families: and to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every man’s inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye

shall inherit."* Yet the very terms of the lot left much to the judgment of those entrusted with the task, who had been previously designated by the Lord;—Eleazar the priest, Joshua, and one prince of every tribe.† The history shows us how many modifications of the original allotment were made, and what regard was had to special requests; so that finally the actual settlement was the result not only of the Lord's appointment, but also of the decision of the judges, and to some extent of their own desires—the same mingling, in fact, of divine and human agencies which we find everywhere in the developments of life.

This distribution of the Land while less marked by stirring incidents than the Conquest, was not inferior in importance, and has a large space allotted to it. Indeed, looking at the minuteness of this record, and that of the prophecies given here and there in Patriarchal blessings and high visions of God, we may well question if its mere geographical import has yet been appreciated. The future of this earth will make all these enigmas clear. As a man plants his Estate, and plants for far-off years, and gives to each tree the soil and situation it requires—so has the Lord planted this earth, and certainly with reference to a time not yet fulfilled; for when has Israel taken its priestly position among the families of the earth? The dying song of Moses waits yet, in part, for its

* Num. xxxiii. 54.

† Num. xxxiii. 17-29.

accomplishment: "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." *

But passing from this to the spiritual lessons to be here gathered, we find in the first Epistle to the Corinthians a passage not unlike this allotment of the land: "There are varieties of Spiritual Gifts, but the same Spirit gives them all; and they are given for various ministrations, but all to serve the same Lord Jesus; and the inward working whereby they are wrought is various, but they are all wrought in every one of those who receive them, by the working of the same God. But the gift whereby the Spirit becomes manifest, is given to each for the profit of all. To one is given by the Spirit the utterance of Wisdom, to another the utterance of Knowledge, according to the working of the same Spirit; to another, the power of Faith through the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of Healing through the same Spirit; to another, the powers which work Miracles; to another, the gift of Prophecy; to another, the discernment of Spirits; to another, varieties of Tongues; to another, the interpretation of Tongues. But all these gifts are wrought by the working of that one and the same Spirit, who distributes them to each

* Deut. xxxii. 8. See on this subject a most suggestive volume, "Israel's Future," by Rev. Capel Molyneux.

according to His will." * Thus a law like that which links in amity the nations of the earth, by the special wealth of each in produce and in art, was to link in holy charity the inheritors of Christ's great kingdom.

Yet this distribution admits the same practical modifications as did that of old. It appears more than probable that a basis for our spiritual gifts is provided in the individuality that is mapped out for each by the laws of transmission, in which we also inherit "according to the tribes of our fathers." Thus far it is "the lot cast into the lap," the whole disposing of which is of the Lord. But how much that narrows or enlarges the natural boundary of one's gifts, depends upon the care and the decisions of others. Again, in spiritual, as in natural things, our own earnest desires, and above all our faithful improvement of the talents given, are allowed a large influence. So that our lot is no portion thrust upon us, but rather that which is set before us.

It is indeed the side of human responsibility, and not God's secret decrees, that is first of all presented in the seven chapters devoted to this subject:—"There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed."

And who can read, with any thoughtfulness, the records of the Apostolic period, without recognizing the importance attached to the gifts of the Spirit; and at the same time admitting, in view of such an enu-

* 1 Cor. xii. 4-11—(Conybeare's rendering).

meration of them as that above cited, that the Church of Christ has scarcely any present possession of them. While the qualifications for the Apostolic office were plainly exceptional, and the gift of tongues is instanced as designed for a sign rather than service, yet taking these gifts as a whole, there is not a hint in Holy Scripture of their temporary use, and subsequent withdrawal; and without such an authority against it, it is but simply reasonable to regard the gifts of God as given in perpetuity to His Church. Nor dare we claim that the blessed truth of His bestowal, is a whit altered by the sad fact of our failure in receptive faith.

Joshua was old and well stricken in years when the Lord reminded him of the neglect of his people to possess the land; indeed, it would even appear that some of the possessions once theirs had relapsed to the enemy. But what was their delay and loss to ours? For nearly nineteen centuries the Church has had her Mighty Conqueror, and her Land of Promise; but while advancing here and there, what hold has she at large upon this vast heritage? *Mental* gifts have indeed been recognized and received often all possible culture; but how often have spiritual gifts—God's own special gifts—been given over to suspicion, and sarcasm, and scorn? It does not furnish the least excuse for this, that there has been so much of false pretence, and even imposture, and so much consequent delusion; for whatever of Truth God has given

us, we are bound to take fearlessly, however counterfeited or perverted: still further, there *will* be counterfeits and perversions until we take it.* Error always thrives upon neglected Truth. How often it happens that in such errors we see the distorted and preposterous shadows of Truth before her light has fully risen. Again, there may be another solution of a certain class of errors which seem to contain a portion of truth. The *basis* only of such spiritual gifts having been laid in our nature at our birth, as a body prepared for a soul—this, if the *real gift* be not received from God's own Spirit, will still remain as a certain blind abortive power, working irregularly and fruitlessly. Had the Church of Christ retained her spirituality, she might never have been vexed with so-called Spiritualism. Had she had more simple faith, she would never have witnessed such silly credulity.

It is precisely these special personal gifts of the Spirit, rather than the more general blessings of the Gospel, that find their symbol in this distribution. All that is common in the heritage depends for development upon that which is peculiar; and it is this dependence, which renders the right reception of these powers a matter of such importance. The Church can only reach her true estate, as each one

* Christlieb, in the Preface to his "Modern Doubt and Christian Belief," says wisely—"Error is always assuredly a mixture of truth and falsehood, nor can be overcome *so long as the elements of truth which it contains are unacknowledged*, and not carefully separated from what is false." (See p. xi.)

uses that gift which God has given for this very purpose:—"He gave some as Apostles; and some as prophets; and some as evangelists; and some as pastors and teachers; *for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*: till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto *a perfect man* unto the measure of the stature of *the fulness of Christ*:"*—this for the positive gain; and for the negative, a deliverance thus, and only thus, from all that is false and fanatical;—"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."†

But now let us gather up in order other, but often accordant lessons of the distribution of the Land. The first tribes mentioned are those of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, on the east of Jordan. Their inheritance was not given them by lot, and although included in the larger grant that was made to Abraham, it was not in that portion which *at this time* was assigned to them by the Lord—the land of Canaan.‡ While awaiting the end of the forty years, two of the tribes had settled upon Gilead as their future home, and preferred a request for this to Moses, with no attempt to conceal their motive: "The country is a land for cattle, and thy

* Eph. iv. 11-13. † Eph. iv. 14. ‡ See Num. xxxiv. 1-12.

servants have cattle.”* Their choice resembled that of Lot, who would have the well-watered plain, however near to Sodom. Moses was justly displeased, and saw clearly the tendency of such falling off from the great advance awaiting them, likening it to the sin of the spies in discouraging other hearts. Upon their promise to go over with their brethren, and help to fight their battles, after which they would return, Moses acceded to their wish rather than approved it. It very soon appeared how this choice exposed them to indifference and danger. In the sublime Song of Deborah we trace one of the first of these results:—

“At the brooks of Reuben were great resolutions of heart.
 Why remainest thou between the hurdles,
 To hear the piping of the flocks?
 At the brooks of Reuben were great projects of heart,
 Gilead rests on the other side of the Jordan.”†

And so they had come rapidly to the pass, when their patriotism could evaporate in good resolutions, and grand projects; when the soft shepherd's pipe could seduce them from the stern summons of the Trumpet. Further on we find that, exposed as they were to the advance of foreign enemies, their cities were the first to surrender; after which their idolatry and consequent captivity hastened apace.‡ Yet Reuben was Israel's first-born, and who can say what lot God held for him. But he could not wait for the

* Num. xxxii. 4.

† Judges v. 15-17—Keil and Delitzsch.

‡ 1 Chron. v. 25, 26.

slow giving of God. It was not the sin of him who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage ; yet he who had chosen only a place for cattle, could never be chosen by God to furnish either prophet, judge, or king, to the house of Israel.

"Bring us not over Jordan," is still the entreaty of many a Christian. Ask us not to give up these worldly advantages : let our possessions lie among the things of earth : has not godliness the promise of the life that now is ? We will not fail to help on the cause of Christ ; we will be loyal to Him and to His Church ; but ask us not to go further ; we are content to take up a lower position. And God may hearken to them in this—giving them their desire, even while He sends "leanness into their soul." Alas, for the high hopes of all whose chief care is for cattle ! Sooner or later they will learn that the Lord Jesus said not in vain, "Beware of covetousness ; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

And yet while giving up all selfish choice, to let God choose our inheritance for us, we are at the same time even commanded to "Covet earnestly the best gifts."* Thus we find Caleb asking for one of the choicest portions, and receiving it as the first inheritance over Jordan ; at the same time reminding Joshua of the events of forty-five years before, and of the good word which he had brought according as

* 1 Cor. xii. 31.

it was in his heart; for deep conviction and a conscience that held him true to this in his confession, had left no room in this noble heart for the cowardice of the ten spies. What memories must have revived in these two men, as he went on to say, "Thou knowest the thing which the Lord spake concerning me and thee, in Kadesh-Barnea:"—No need to cast the lot for Caleb!—he had known all those years where his possessions lay:—"Now, therefore, give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day."*

Long before he saw it, Hebron must have been dear to him by all hallowed associations. It was an old city when Abraham pitched his tent in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron.† It was there that Jehovah and His angels visited him. It was there that in bitter bereavement, he bought the only spot that was his by earthly title—a grave in which to bury his dead out of his sight. There he himself was buried. There Isaac came to sojourn in old age, and in his turn be buried. To the same tomb had been borne, in solemn state, the embalmed body of Israel. The spot itself was one of rare beauty; the hill—which still bears an ancient oak called "the Patriarch"—overlooks a picturesque and fertile valley, and travellers tell us of the varied charms that complete the picture, in their most glowing language. But delightful as was the spot, it was the most difficult of all to win. Its name at that time marked it as the abode

* Josh. xiv. 6-12.

† Gen. xiii. 18.

of giants—"Kirjath-arba, the city of Arba, the father of Anak." The sight of the Anakims had brought no dismay to the youthful heart of Caleb; and now while strong men had died in the wilderness, he still kept the undiminished vigor of his prime. Moreover, the Lord was with him:—"I shall be able to drive them out, *as the Lord said*;"—"And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb, because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel."* Henceforth, no longer the city of the giants, it was to bear that name which signified Communion, Fellowship;—as the Arabs call it to this day, "*The friend of God.*" Nor is it surely without its meaning in a Book where names are so significant and typical, that it was at Hebron that David was anointed King of all Israel, and that there he reigned seven years before his throne was set up at Jerusalem. Blessings gather like a halo, around the very dwelling-place of him who wholly follows the Lord his God.

And still God has His choice possessions; and He gives them still to the "willing and obedient." They belong to those who, while others are doubting or denying His Word of promise, still serve Him steadfastly in all good conscience. Such a faith fears not to claim its possessions. Nor does it marvel when evil is heard saying:

* Josh. xiv. 13, 14.

“I thought the best, pervertèd, would be worst.”

And so it turns not back from the hope of recovering God's primeval blessing, where all seems given over to the curse. Man's noblest powers and privileges are ever the first to be seized by Satan for his stronghold; but the Spirit of God is well able to dispossess him, though like the three Anakims, he sit there in his giant trinity of evil, keeping his goods in peace. Nothing in man has suffered loss like that which is highest in him, because most like God. Instead of that holy love that was to hold him with all his heart and strength to the Source of his life, that he might ever be enriched from Him whose name is Love—instead of that blessed love which was to knit him also to his kind, in all varied relationships and companionships, that so it might join all together in one body, and compact and supply all, as it thus made increase with the very increase of God—instead of this, the powers that were given for it, have stooped to the creature in place of the Creator, and so sunk into inordinate and vile affections, until the sacred name of Love has been often utterly lost in that of Lust. A very den of wild beasts, or at best, a city of the giants, is then, that heart of man which God created to love Him, and to love its fellow.

Yes, LOVE—COMMUNION—FELLOWSHIP—this is the choice possession in all our Father's land. The gifts of intellect may be even glorious, and yet have

no glory, by reason of one that excelleth. Love is set higher than knowledge, not only for her own sake, but because she has a wisdom all her own, which grows not in the slow way of gathering from without, but glows out from within, a light and a law unto itself! Love does not become rich; she is born an heir-ess. What privilege like that of being a "friend of God!" Such sublimating power lies in this blessed fellowship, that it is but a little step from it to glory. So Enoch walking with God, "was not, for God took him." So the face of Moses shines, and Stephen's becomes like that of an angel. The very life of God being most fully expressed in Love, it becomes the life of our life, feeding it, warming it, and cherishing it. It is the very Sun that shineth in its strength. What wonders might it not work on this poor, starving earth, so turned as it is from its true pole, that its short days can only shiver in a few slanting rays. Whenever man will let his God bring back this perverted love, to be true to Him, his whole nature will leap into luxuriance. Germs that lie utterly dormant, will then be developed. The world awaits this healing, quickening miracle of Love; and blessed indeed, are they who, meanwhile, follow the Lord so fully that He can give them this choice inheritance.

Yet we are taught also by this record that it is indeed,

"The most difficult of tasks to keep
Heights which the soul is competent to gain."

Joshua had already taken Hebron ; but now it needed to be retaken by Caleb, and yet again by David. "The expulsive power of a new affection" is needed not only to drive out, but to keep out all that is unhallowed. Here, then, first of all in this Citadel of Love and holy fellowship with the Father and with the Son, our King sets up His throne.* Here we make our covenant with Him, and He with us, and then when our love has been perfected, He will reign yet more royally in "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God."

In the portion of Caleb, there was one stronghold reserved by him for the prowess of another arm, that should at the same time secure a greater prize : "And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife." The little episode that follows is again repeated in the Book of Judges, as though its lovely lesson might possibly be overlooked.† The daughter knew her father's bounty, and so she moved her husband to ask of him a field ; and along with this they needed springs of water :—for this she herself will ask him. Drawing nigh in her journey to her father, she alights in token of reverence and entreaty. But before her lips can shape a word, the father's heart is open :—"What wilt thou, my daughter?"

* Cf. 1 Chron. xi. 1-7, and xxix. 27.

† Cf. Josh. xv. 16-19, and Judges i. 12-15.

“Give me a blessing ; for thou hast given me a south land ; give me also springs of water.” “And he gave her the upper springs and the nether springs :”—above all she had asked or thought ; springs in the valley, and springs also upon the hills, so that she should lack no good thing. The lot was not so rigid as to exclude either rewards for the faithful, or free gifts for the filial, trusting heart. The patient endurance of a dry land might have been a good thing ; but how much better the faith that drew her on ! What dearth, what weary wanderings might have been her portion, had she never said at her father’s feet, “GIVE ME A BLESSING !”

Whatever portion God has assigned to us, or whatever He has permitted our hand to win, what is anything or all, unless He add the blessing of these springs of water, of which He has told us, “The water that I shall give shall be within, a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.” No simpler, stronger symbol of the Spirit, could be found than this. A Spring—a Well-spring—never dry—never turbid—from its clear depths, fed through the secret veins of earth, it gushes ever into life ; it goeth not downward, but it *springeth up*. Resisting its own common law, it resists also the influences that meet it : in the fiery heat of summer it is the cool and satisfying spring ; and the fierce frosts of winter can not bind it, for it is warm with central heat. The soul that has found all its springs in God, never knows

its supplies to fail or vary. And we need both upper and nether springs: we need the Spirit of God in the highest regions of life; and down to its lowest level, the need is still the same. The thought of few of God's children is broad enough to embrace both in their asking. With some the thought is this—In the things of God we must have the Spirit of God; but it would derogate from His dignity to refer the commonplaces of life to Him. Such familiarity were fatal—our own judgment, our natural powers, are our resources here. Again, others have no true conception of spiritual things; never having been among these hills, they only aspire to live out life in the low valley of common duties, and to have these enriched by blessing from the Lord.

Meanwhile, our Father's thought is to harmonize these two regions of life, and no Christian can have real completeness of character without it. Who has not known good people—say holy men and women—saints, indeed, in all spiritual things, with both knowledge and power—whom to *meet* was a delight;—but with whom to *live* were utter discord;—they had no nether springs: spiritual, but not practical, they seemed better fitted for heaven than earth. Such a life is not patterned after that of Christ. The Lord Jesus never overlooked the little things: one moment with His holy hands lifting the cold, folded palms of Jairus' little daughter, and saying from the heights of spiritual power, "Damsel, arise!"—the

next moment, He commands the astonished and forgetful mother to give her something to eat! The faith that is fully poised forgets no earthly duty. Abraham, when he entertains angels, can run to the herd as the thoughtful host, to make ready their table; nor do even angels upon their side neglect the courtesy of partaking of his feast. What might not even the petty things of life—as we dare to call them—become, if thus purified and elevated by the permeating Spirit! How many a wife and mother finds that her lot has fallen in a valley, and that her field of service in itself is almost utterly arid. It is not a change of lot she needs—it is the fountain of living water. Coming to her Father in heaven not with murmuring, but thanksgiving, how graciously He listens to her plea, “Give me a blessing.” It is there already—close beside her, but unseen by her weeping eyes, until God shows her the well. Then she thirsts no more; and He teaches her how to guide the gracious gift, till everywhere her valley home is green and glad.

We find next in order a request from the children of Joseph. Already Manasseh held the rich portion of all Bashan, and half of Gilead,* while the five daughters of Zelophehad had been allowed to count as so many heirs along with the five brethren of their father in receiving ten portions in Canaan. Ephraim also had one of the richest portions in all the land.

* Josh. xiii. 29-31.

But covetous of still more, they brought their cause to Joshua, resting their claim not on any word of the Lord, but upon their own conceit:—"Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, *seeing I am a great people*, forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto?" The answer of Joshua, himself an Ephraimite, was both just and spirited. He challenges them to prove their greatness by cutting down the wood country, and driving out the giants. They object that they are not able to do this, since the Canaanites have iron chariots. But Joshua, even in virtually granting their request, abides by his first decision—"Thou art a great people, and hast great power; thou shalt not have one lot only; but the mountains shall be thine; for it is a wood and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine; for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong."* The rebuke belongs to all who desire God's immediate giving, to take the place of their own courage and energy; who would have Him even make up the deficit of their own timidity and indolence. There are many who aspire to be gifted by the Lord, who are slow to see how largely He gives through their own diligent use of what He has already given—the full cultivation and occupancy of their own lot. What an enlarging of all our lots would there be, if instead of vainly envying the gifts denied us, we gave all dili-

* Josh. xvii. 14-18.

gence in clearing the wilderness, in breaking up the fallow ground, and above all, in expelling every enemy. The clamor of conceit is ever—"Give me opportunity, and I will be great:" the answer for all such is, "Show yourselves great by first filling the sphere in which you already are."

After the allotment of the Land as far as the families of Judah and Joseph, the work was for a time suspended. No outward cause existed for this. Joshua said unto the children of Israel, that is, the seven remaining tribes which had not yet received their inheritance—"How long are ye *slack* to go to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?" It seems almost incredible that after all this training, and preparation, and warfare, when there remained but one more simple step to the realization of God's great promise—even then they should come short of it. Jordan—Gilgal—Jericho—they had failed at none of these; yet now a spirit of sloth possesses them at the last critical moment. It is found needful to rouse them by a new expedient

Three men from each tribe were appointed to go through the land and describe it. Walking first through the entire country, they then "described it by cities into seven parts, in a book." This exploration not only served them essentially in the casting of lots, but was of far more importance in another way. When they had seen the land with their own eyes, and the people had heard from them this minute

report, they were aroused to new eagerness to enjoy it.

Such slackness as theirs is found still in the Church of Christ, and as then, in by far the greater majority. Some indeed, like Judah and Joseph, press on at once to their possessions; but others linger until some one arises to stir them up. Inertia of spirit is one of the last besetments of the believer—the more to be feared, that it comes at a time when he needs to be especially alert. If the first step of our Christian course be decisive, so also is the last: “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.”* The foot must not grow weary, till it has reached in its experience, the utmost length, and utmost breadth, of all the promises of God.

But to Christians collectively, how emphatically may it be still said, “There remaineth yet much land to be possessed.” The Church has still to measure out with the lines of her knowledge even, as far as the revelation of the Gospel reaches. There are vast regions of glorious Truth that are little known to the many. How few venture into the wilderness of Prophecy, to pitch their tents! And who is there to go up that highest summit among all their holy mountains, and see what things they are which our Blessed Lord has “shewn unto His servants,” and “which must shortly come to pass?”† What heart is found so

* Heb. iii. 14.

† Rev. i. 1.

full of holy courage, as to go forth alone, and year after year, steer steadily up to the great fountain-heads of those mighty rivers, that have flowed so long from unknown sources? Alas, for Christianity, when she gave up that good old way of "faring forth" to seek the Truth—to go into her cloister, and there with infinite pains indeed, make out her maps from the old models of men whom she called her masters—till at last she could settle down in a comfortable congratulation over their completeness! What room has she, indeed, in her beautifully executed systems of Theology, for the strange stories of these travellers and sight-seers!

It were wise for us to heed such a voice as that which charged the Pilgrim Fathers of our Land in their exile for conscience sake—"I am verily persuaded, I am very confident, that the Lord hath more truth yet to break forth out of His holy Word."* Lengthen therefore thy cords, O Church of Christ.

* Neal gives this parting address of Pastor Robinson as follows:—

"BRETHERN :—We are now quickly to part from one another, and whether I may ever live to see your faces on earth any more, the God of heaven only knows; but whether the Lord has appointed that or no, I charge you before God and His blessed angels, that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

"If God reveal anything to you, by any other instrument of His, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth by my ministry; for I am verily persuaded, the Lord has more

Strengthen all thy stakes. "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitation." Arise! walk through the land, ye chosen men of God—Look from its Mountain-tops—Sail out upon its Seas—Write it in many a book—Describe it in the ears of all the people—Stir them from this slackness—Let them know what are the riches of the glory of this inheritance in Christ Jesus!

The last of all to receive his possession in the Land of Promise, was Joshua. As it was given by special

truth yet to break forth out of His holy Word. For my part I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the Reformed Churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go at present no further than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw; whatever part of His will our God has revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it; and the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things.

"This is a misery much to be lamented, for though they were burning and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God; but were they now living, would be as willing to embrace further light as that which they first received. I beseech you remember it is an article of your Church-Covenant, that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written Word of God. Remember that, and every other article of your Sacred Covenant. But I must here withal exhort you to take heed what you receive as truth—examine it, consider it; and compare it with other Scriptures of truth, before you receive it, for it is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick anti-Christian darkness, and that perfection of knowledge should break forth at once."—*Neal's History of the Puritans*, Vol. I., pp. 476, 477.

word of God, so had it also to be given by all the people, as his inheritance among them—Timnath-serah—the portion of the Sun. Even so, when the Lord Jesus has secured to all His people the possessions which He has won for them, then will His tabernacle also be with men, and He will dwell among them.

There were still, however, two other classes to be provided for, without their receiving what might be called an inheritance. These classes were the two extremes of Society—the Manslayer and the Levite. Even for the poor fugitive fleeing from the Avenger of blood, there were to be cities where he might not only find a refuge, but a home ;—a refuge in all cases until his cause was judged, and it was shown whether he was an unwilling slayer, or a murderer ; and then a home, if delivered from judgment, till the death of the High Priest should restore him to his native city. Thus in dividing the land, the Lord did not forget the needs of the most distressed. The six cities selected were so situated, that some one of them was always within reach. So has the Saviour placed Himself within the reach of all, even of such as are in utmost peril of Vengeance. He is the Refuge, and the Home, and the final Restorer. It is surely most significant that instead of mean and unimportant cities being chosen, these six were all among the forty-eight Levitical cities. It showed not only the standing of all on common ground, but secured to the

distressed the utmost sympathy and succor; for it is always found that the purest in heart, who dwell highest to God, are the most compassionate and loving to them who are out of the way.

The Levites held their cities upon a different tenure from the other tribes. "Unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance, for the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as He said unto them." * If they were denied in some sort an earthly portion, it was that they might claim more clearly the heavenly home. This distribution of the Levites among all the tribes of Israel is a most striking instance of the reversal of a curse; and again, taken in connection with a like scattering of Simeon, we see the same outward lot, so altered by inner conditions, as to present the very extremes of favor and displeasure. Both of them were to be divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel.† Simeon, therefore, instead of receiving a clearly-bounded territory, had only those portions of Judah which proved too much for that tribe. The cities assigned them were in various and remote groups, so as naturally to place them at a disadvantage, and in dependence upon others. Simeon is very significantly omitted from the last blessing upon the tribes of Israel; while in the case of Levi, we find a striking series of prophecies, extending from Genesis to Malachi, and leading from the depths up to the heights. Coupled with his brother Simeon, we hear

* Josh. xiii. 33.

† Gen. xlix. 5-7.

the dying Israel recoil from their anger and self-will—"O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united." * What a change had come upon the children of Levi, when Moses gave his blessing—"They shall teach Jacob Thy judgments, and Israel Thy law." † And, finally, to what honor had they been chosen, when we read in Malachi: "My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared Me, and was afraid before My name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with Me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity." ‡ So a leaden curse, seeming like a millstone about their necks, is transmuted by the alchemy of grace into a sort of golden crown; and while the first is found to be the last, the last is first. Reuben, the first-born, has sheep-folds; and Levi, the outcast, has the service of the Most High God.

However bitter and dark the past record of any life, how dare any one despair in the face of such a fact as this? And what a stimulus is given here, as everywhere in God's Word, to choose the better part—to brave the self-denial and abnegations of service, for the sake of such a covenant of life and peace, and such abundant blessedness to others.

How many ministers of Christ—how many missionaries in their far greater sacrifices—must have had

* Gen. xlix. 6.

† Deut. xxxiii. 10.

‡ Mal. ii. 5, 6.

their souls sustained by the assurance, "The Lord God is my inheritance." For us who so follow Christ, there is a standard of both wealth and honor, that the world wots not of. The True Riches outweigh the treasures of all earth; and looking to Him who said, "I am among you as He that serveth," we rejoice to make ourselves least of all, and servants of all, and thus in all lowliness and love—

"To fill the measure up of gentle deeds—
Even as we have learn'd that in these,
That in the holy Christian charities,
And the suppliance of the lowliest needs
Of the most lowly, our true greatness is!"

The account of the distribution of the Land closes with a strong statement, that at first glance would seem unsupported by facts. But we have to bear in mind that the great reality of the Lord's giving was none the less true, for a failure here and there to receive, or to keep the good thing that had been given. It is the record of what the Lord had done, and therefore may not be sullied by the failures of man: "THE LORD GAVE unto Israel ALL THE LAND which He sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it and dwelt therein. And THE LORD GAVE THEM REST round about, according to all that He sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; THE LORD DELIVERED all their enemies into their hand. THERE FAILED

NOT AUGHT of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; ALL CAME TO PASS." *

It was the triumph of that same Lord, who, "when He ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." It is this same Lord, that will, without fail, give us the riches of the glory of His inheritance, but who, therefore, gives to every one of us all, some special gift of His Spirit. The very smallest of them all may not be hidden with impunity. It is even because the gifts so differ, that we are to be so diligent in using them.

Fellow-Christian, "*stir up* the gift of God that is in thee!" It is thy wealth; it is thy portion among thy brethren; be not slack to possess thy land. Church of Christ, claim all thy gifts! Thou mayest not say of one of them, as given to any member in all thy Body—"I have no need of thee."—But "COVET EARNESTLY THE BEST GIFTS."

* Josh. xxi. 43-45.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LAST CHARGE OF JOSHUA.

“TAKE GOOD HEED, THEREFORE, UNTO YOURSELVES, THAT YE LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD.”—(*Josh.* xxiii. 11). “AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD.”—(*Josh.* xxiv. 15).

The testimony of Triumph was not permitted to be the close of the Book of Joshua. The aged Leader of God's people, looking to their future as well as to their past, had a solemn message to leave with them before he was gathered to his fathers. Once and again he must speak those words of cheer, and words of warning, that pressed upon his spirit. His deep interest in the nation, and his own sense of responsibility, received an unmistakable emphasis in the second gathering at Shechem, where the Elders and Judges “stood before God,” while Joshua, with all intensity of earnestness, gave his parting charge.

There was no new thing to say; but simple as the exhortation was, momentous were the interests that hung upon their heeding. He reminded them of

what the Lord had done in the ^ypast—of what He was ready to do in the future. It was the Lord who would still fight for them, and continue to drive out their enemies; therefore one man of them should chase a thousand. But as He had brought all good things upon them, so would He, if they turned away from Him, bring upon them all evil things. St. Paul repeated the same charge in substance, when he wrote to the Church in Rome: "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God—on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."* By reason of such hopes, and by reason of such fears, they were to be very courageous to keep and do all that had been commanded. From idols and false gods, and from all who served them, they were to turn utterly away. And that all this might be accomplished, there was given one golden watch-word—"TAKE GOOD HEED THEREFORE UNTO YOURSELVES, THAT YE LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD."† As God has no other power whereby to draw us unto Himself than His "bands of love," so has He no other power by which to hold us steadfast unto the end. It is the only clew that has been given us, to lead us safely out from the labyrinth of life, and we may not let it slip; for losing this, we wander in "the mist of darkness forever." With weightiest reason, therefore, did the dying Leader

* Rom. xi. 22.

† Josh. xxiii. 11.

of his people say, "Take good heed that ye LOVE the Lord your God."

The first pass-word given to the youthful soldier is "TRUST;" but as the hours move on, he finds that he must learn still another to secure his safety—"WATCH." The Captain of our salvation who gave the first so often, gave this also at the last. Sitting on the Mount of Olives, with none but Peter and James and John beside Him, He could not say it to them only; but His holy care took us all into His thought that hour:—"What I say unto you, I say unto all, WATCH."* How solemnly He spoke it in the Garden! Temptations were gathering thick around them; therefore they were to watch with an eye glancing at the enemy, even while resting evermore upon God:—"WATCH AND PRAY, that ye enter not into temptation."† And there was yet another need to watch. The Master was coming in the Morning; but neither man nor angel knew when that morning would dawn: and meantime the thief would be seeking to enter;—"Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."‡

So, also, St. Paul at Miletus, looking for the last time on that dear flock from Ephesus, foresees the grievous wolves, and straightway charges them, "THEREFORE, WATCH!" Already by the space of three years, he had not ceased to warn every one night and day with tears. But still the peril will

* Mark xiii. 37.

† Matt. xxvi. 41.

‡ Matt. xxiv. 42.

come. Even from among those very men, now weeping sore upon his neck, will some arise to speak perverse things; and unless they watch, others still will be drawn away—"TAKE HEED, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock."*

St. Peter, also, counted it not enough to tell in his last Epistle, of exceeding great and precious promises; but looking on to the days of "false teachers" and "destructive heresies," he gives thus his closing charge: "Beloved, BEWARE lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness."†

At the close of that most wonderful Epistle, which above all others, tells us of Life, and Light, and Love, with what startling abruptness come the closing words—as though the Apostle had said already his last tender thoughts, and then turned again to utter this one brief warning—"Little children, BEWARE OF IDOLS."‡

Finally, when the Lord Jesus, walking in the midst of the seven candlesticks, sends forth His messages to the Churches, it is to sound successive notes of warning, even while holding out the highest promises. The solemn charge to Sardis is more or less the common burden of all—"BE WATCHFUL, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die."§

* Acts xx. 17-38.

† 1 John v. 21.

‡ 2 Pet. iii. 17.

§ Rev. iii. 2.

If one would understand the necessity for such warnings from age to age, let him but turn to the records of that Church which Christ purchased with His own blood. "So safe," is our thought at first, as we look upon our Surety. So safe with such a Saviour—so safe through the might of the indwelling Spirit. But these records, what say they? There is no study that is so passing sorrowful as Church History, even with all that also makes it joyful. Behold how quickly the wolves break in, and the slaughter and scattering of the sheep! Behold the heavy mists of speculative thought rising along the stagnant shores of old Philosophy, and spreading far and wide, till the pure air is poisoned in the homes of thousands! Behold the floods of worldliness let loose, and sweeping along the multitude! Behold, again, the gross darkness that covers the people, till they weary themselves as in the very fires, to purchase peace and pardon!

And even when the Lord came forth so marvelously to restore the lost Truth, and sent a new Morning, and a glad Spring-time to the world—behold how speedily once more, there came the blighting winds of deadly doctrine, or more destructive still, the chill frosts of utter apathy! And looking also at the time not yet handed over to History, behold the swift and scathing fires that incendiary hands have kindled—setting any of their wild lights to do the work, and snatching often as they dare the sacred torch of

Science, to hurry on the conflagration! Yet of the lands that have been thus ravaged, we must remember, that the Lord may still see and count His seven thousand, while even a prophet thinks himself alone.

In view of all the past, and the scourges of the present in many a region, can we fondly hope that our own day, or our own land, is to prove at last the happy exception? Never, indeed, was there witnessed such activity in spreading the Gospel—such affluence even of Christian appliances. But may not the Church be nearing in her career the case of that last one among the typical Seven, when she seemed in her own eyes to have need of nothing?—and yet all that the faithful and true Witness could say was this, “Because thou art lukewarm, I will spew thee out of my mouth.”* No external activity can ever take the place of personal affection and inward communion with the Lord.

Nor is this the only peril of our day. We recognize with great joy, the fact of a wide-spread earnestness to come up to a higher standard of Christian life. Sometimes it would seem that we are even on the eve of unprecedented blessings. There is good promise of a more vital hold on Truth, as well as of its clearer vision. There are signs of more ardent love, and more joyful sacrifice in service. Above all, brotherly love is making the boundary lines of a greatly divided Church, if not yet indistinct, yet far

* Rev. iii. 16.

more unobtrusive. No longer high walls and moats, but blooming hedgerows mark the fields upon the one vast estate. Indeed, one can so look at the present blessings of the Christian community, as to make the simplest suggestion of fear appear a discord and disloyalty.

There have been times not a few—and in whose memory is there not such a one—when God's Spirit has so brooded over great assemblies, as to knit them into wondrous unity, and to lift them up as on wings of eagles. Did it not seem on some such happy day as though all that was low, and petty, and self-willed, had gone forever! The River swelled with the upheaving tide from God's great outer Sea, till all its wonted obstacles, its sand-bars and its snags, were too far down to touch, and free and fearless each little sail went on its way. The full flood of Heavenly Love had lifted them all up into safety. But have we no need to watch the ebbing? How soon may the mindful Spirit need to revive these memories—"Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard; and *hold fast*, and repent."*

Do we not already see the signs that should be heeded? Has not the Philistine stalked into our conquered Canaan? It is such an easy step from leading the people like a flock, to lording it over God's heritage; so natural after judging for oneself, to judge the consciences of others also; so easy to for-

* Rev. iii. 3.

get, that the angelic tongue may turn to a poor tinkling cymbal, and all knowledge and all faith become nothing, the moment charity collapses. Arrogance, bickerings, cliques, dogmatism, jealousies—one dead fly among them all, will spoil the best “ointment of the apothecary”—What have they who speak of holiness, to do with unclean things like these!

Nor must it be overlooked that the very qualities which fit men to be leaders, expose them to the danger of such assumption, grounded upon strength of will. And precisely here are some of the most difficult of conquests called for: the development of active energies is an easy task; but to be gentle as Christ was gentle—“in meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves”—to make oneself of no reputation—this is the difficult task; for this sets aside the high spirit of man, that the Spirit of Jesus may rule in all things.

All such as have found in faith the victory that overcometh the world, still need to listen to one of the most striking features in this last charge of Joshua;—the direction given to still drive out their enemies.^{*} Such a charge at first seems to contradict the claim of a complete conquest. But it is found thoroughly true in experience. Whoever dreams that because his Garden has been well-weeded, he may now give over that care? How often it happens that the round is not complete, before it needs some-

^{*} Josh. xxiii. 5.

where to be renewed. No weed may be suffered to sow its seed in that well-enclosed spot, but the germs are in the very soil, and they float on all the winds. One may gain upon them, some of them may wholly disappear, and the others be known only to one vigilant eye and unsparing hand—but wherever man is put into his garden “to dress it and to keep it,” he will have to continue this conquest. And what need to watch also the too rampant growth—to train that which is wild and irregular, to prune the choice vine that it may bear much fruit—to watch the insidious and fast-spreading blight—the sudden attacks of insect enemies—the withering heat and the wanton winds! Never may one dream of success through immunity from these: that is the reward of never-tiring watchfulness.

But it may be suggested, such watchfulness is painful. It involves anxiety, care, responsibility, which we are taught to cast upon the Lord. Why not, since we are so apt to become unwatchful, simply hand it all entirely over to the Lord? Because we have nowhere any warrant so to abuse that trust—because we are never to abandon that duty which He has plainly laid upon us. We may and must abandon all anxiety, all distrust—but *watchfulness, never!* The watchword that the Lord Jesus gave us was not “Abandon yourselves,” but “*Watch!*”

This combination of both trusting and watching is perfectly simple. The Alpine traveller selects his

guide with care, and then places full confidence in him. But does he expect his guide to absolutely carry him?—or does he forthwith become reckless? Does he rush to the edge of the precipice, or whither he will? Does he not understand rather that his own prudence is presupposed, and that he must, under the directions of his guide, use his foresight, skill, and strength, to their full limit? And yet his confidence is solely in his guide; and *because* he watches him, and follows him, and obeys him in all things, he can also trust him.

We are told that in the last days, perilous times shall come, and that a multitude of evils will then be let loose. How much more is yet to come, none of us can tell; but certainly it seems the characteristic of our own time that all the various enemies that have ever attacked the Church, are now combined against it; so that while we watch on one side the openly advancing foe, the secret snare is set for us upon the other. Never, surely, was there such a necessity to “*watch in all things.*” Every new treasure entrusted to our keeping, must needs draw down the thief upon us. All our priceless possessions as the Church of Christ, expose us in precise proportion to their development, to the rage of him “that dasheth in pieces.” Therefore are we charged—“Keep the munition! Watch the way! Fortify thy power mightily.”* Not to the few, not to the most, but

* Nahum ii. 1.

to all His soldiers—every one of them in a post of danger—does the Lord Jesus now speak from heaven, “What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!”

Watch, then, even along the very line of progress and of seeming safety, lest ye take one step beyond the safe footing; lest you carelessly cross that light line which is still the very real boundary between good and evil.

Watch, lest while you break free from the trammels of mere Tradition, and claim that freedom of thought which is your rightful heritage, in which every man is to be “fully persuaded in his own mind”—watch, lest there come an overweening sense of your own power, and scope of thought—lest you fancy in some vain moment, that by searching you can find out God. Watch, lest, like that anointed cherub, set by God, of old, upon His holy mountain, thy heart also be lifted up, and thy beauty be corrupted by reason of thy brightness. Watch, lest thou “set thy heart as the heart of God!”*

And watch also, ye whom the very Spirit of God is leading on, illuminating your vision—who see deeper than all forms and symbols, and yet behold them as mediating between the natural and the spiritual; who have learned what channels have been constituted, through which the all-powerful Word can give and your lowly faith receive—Watch, lest that which is now real, become ideal only; lest Imagination

* See Ezek. xxviii. 1-19.

usurp the place of the Invisible power of God, and Sense encroach upon the realm of Spirit. Watch, lest your high-way of spirituality bend little by little toward that which is beneath; remember that even along such a treacherous track as this, has many an unthinking traveller missed his mark—Therefore, WATCH!

And you who, listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit, find Him teaching as man never taught, beware lest in some moment when your ear is turned the way of your own heart's lust—a stranger's voice should seem to you the voice that calls you onward; and your fancies and your fears alike combine to cheat you, till you wander far from the Good Shepherd: remember that this very road is white with the bones of those who have fallen upon their high places:—Therefore, WATCH.

And you who have come to account Charity as greater than all creeds, who see everywhere how they that love and fear God are accepted of Him, beware lest you lose sight of Truth, in giving place to her poor counterpart—and the mere convictions of Conscience, with all her variable voices, come to claim a common credit. Remember that Eternal Truth is stable as the being of God is stable. Remember that her pure, white light, as it floweth from His throne forever, is more potent by far than any of the brightest of those refracted beams that work their little wonders. Remember that Truth is no divisible fund, but “the liv-

ing Child " which no sword must slay ; and that every fragment which you forfeit, is so much loss in the completeness of your own life.

And you also who have learned that this Truth is, indeed, the chief jewel in the crown laid up for you—who know that it is not a vain thing for you, but your very life, to be embodied in you as it was in Him who said—"*I AM the Truth*"—watch in your turn, that while you thus hold fast to all that is immovable, you give full freedom also to that which ever changes, because it ever lives. Smother her not in a close-fitting shroud—stiffen her not into a statue—and settle not the measure of a growth that is not reached. Therefore, watch as Wardens of the Truth, that while you guard the majestic forest oak, and suffer no rude hand to mar that strong old trunk that has stood the same for ages—that still you let it year by year put forth its new and living verdure as it pleases.

Watch, ye who have been trained in holy awe of the high attributes of your God, and have stood afar off as ye worshipped, lest this very reverence of yours become a barrier, to stay that tide of love with which the Lord is seeking to enrich your being—lest ever, ye lie flat upon your faces, forgetful of that blessed bosom where every disciple whom Jesus loves, may lean as fearless as a child. But watch, ye who have learned this lesson, and remember that you are not to be less reverent because more loving ; that your

freedom is to be no forwardness. Remember, also, that it is fitting that the household caress should be sheltered under the home shadow. Sons and daughters of a King, it is your sweet privilege to forget all state in a Father's fondness: but before that world that knows Him only as its Sovereign, give Him the reverence that is His due. Let not even the dear, familiar names by which He would have you call Him when alone with Him, fall so freely upon the ears of others, that they turn away to misdeem His dignity. Therefore, watch!

Take heed that when the Lord Jesus bids you "go and show what great things God hath done to you," that at once you go your way and publish it: but take heed also that when He charges you, as He sometimes will—"See thou tell no man," that then you only keep all these things, and ponder them in your hearts.

Watch, ye whom the Lord has brought into His good Land of Promise, and given it to you to possess—watch, lest ever you come to rely upon a past experience, instead of His continual faithfulness.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Resist him steadfast in the faith. And watch him all the more when he transforms himself into an angel of light. Watch his open attacks and his secret entanglements. Watch that you suffer nothing which the Spirit of God condemns

to linger in your land—that even the little failures of your consecrated lives, prove not the daily vexing of your souls, as of those who walk among thorns and briers.

Watch all along the line of His Commandments—walking in love—walking as children of Light—walking circumspectly—proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. Watch that ye use faithfully every gift that He has given you. Take heed especially that you “first learn to show piety at home.” Watch that as you say in the hearing of all Israel, “As for me and my house we will serve the Lord,” so you be willing to write upon the very bridles of your horses,* “Holiness unto the Lord.”

Watch all along the line of His Promises, that you receive all that He so freely gives. Day by day let the healing, animating beams of the Sun of Righteousness shine down upon you. Moment by moment take that breath of life which the Lord Jesus breathed into you when He said—“*Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*”

Take good heed that ye still search the Scriptures daily. Watch the ripening, one after another, of the twelve manner of fruits that are borne upon its blessed boughs—that so your souls at each new period of life may feed upon never-failing freshness.

And watch that ye still come continually to Him of whom these Scriptures testify, *that ye may have life.* Feed upon Him daily as your true Bread of

* Zech. xiv. 20, marginal reading.

Life. Let your holy fellowship with Christ be close and continual. "Watch unto prayer"—"praying always"—"praying in the Holy Ghost." Take heed above all things that ye "continue in His love." Watch most of all this Fountain-head of all the issues of your life. Take heed that evermore this love of Christ constrain you. So in a perfect love that casteth out all fear—in trust and not in terror, shall ye sing upon your Watch-tower, "*The Lord is my Keeper*"—"Thou wilt keep him in *perfect peace*, whose mind is stayed on Thee because he *trusteth in Thee*."

BLESSED IS HE THAT WATCHETH.

PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE,

QUOTED WITH VARIATIONS FROM OUR PRESENT
VERSION.

[These variations have been often used in order to bring the force of the original to bear as fully as possible upon the subject in hand, selecting whatever accessible rendering appeared best to effect this, and sometimes using a slight paraphrase. The words employed are not at all suggested as in all cases to be preferred.]

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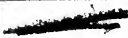










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